THE POLITICS OF FAMINE IN ETHIOPIA

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

ABSTRACT

In attempting to explain the causes of famine, the literature on famine points to different factors. This list of causes includes: drought; neo-Malthusian population growth; environmental degradation; limited technology; capitalist development, or the lack of it; the nature of the state, blamed either for lack of intervention or, on the contrary, for too much intervention; and, war.

However, to attempt to determine how causation of famine might be quantitatively apportioned between the different factors listed in the debates on causes of famine is of limited value, precisely because the different factors that promote famine - drought, environmental degradation, economic decline, war - are inextricably intertwined and interact with one another. Moreover, famine is not simply predetermined by the factors that the debate on causes itemizes. People's own actions and what people choose to do also shapes the outcome and future strategies for survival.

The concern of this thesis is with famine in the case study areas, but our concern is not with debating the causes of famine as much as with identifying consequences. We examine the effects of the array of forces on people's strategies for survival in the research areas during and after the drought and famine of the mid-1980's. We describe the different strategies pursued by people in the study areas in the circumstances that existed during the drought and famine of the mid-1980's; and then discuss the consequences of those actions for people's ability to recover and for people's future survival strategies.

The empirical data are based on two case studies carried out over a 6 month period from late October 1991 to end April 1992 in the Kallu area of southern Wollo. Wollo is the province that was hit hardest by famine during 1984/5 and in 1972/4. In documenting the resource base in which people in the study areas sought to survive, our findings challenge commonly held assumptions about the effects of the 1975 Land Reform, the nature of Peasant Associations, and the nature of gender relations. The findings on the consequences of people's responses during the drought and famine of the mid-1980's indicate that we need to reconsider the issue of what is meant by the notion of 'coping', so central to much of the literature on famine survival strategies.

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ILLUSTRATIONS

Page

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CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

The Ethiopian famine of 1984/85 did not start in 1984, it was only discovered by the international media in that year. Documents from the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) show clearly enough that in the northeast of the country, including Wollo, Tigray, Eritrea, Gondar, and parts of northern Shoa, famine was building up force and momentum throughout the latter part of the 1970s (See Chronology of the 1984-5 Ethiopian famine in Appendix I).

Other than appealing for international aid, the Ethiopian government made no attempt to avert the brewing crisis. Indeed, it was only in October 1984, after the media discovery of the famine and after the government had dispensed with the celebrations held in the previous month to mark the 10th anniversary of the 1974 Ethiopian revolution, that the Mengistu government declared the famine an official priority. When the relief effort finally got underway, domestic politics - i.e., the secessionist wars in the north of the country - took precedence over the needs of the famine victims. Despite pressure from the international donor community, the government followed a deliberate policy of withholding food aid from the rebel-held, and contested, areas of Tigray, Eritrea, and parts of northern Wollo.

The international humanitarian relief effort set in motion from late October 1984 and throughout most of 1985 was unprecedented but, again, the response of western governments and the main U.N. donor agencies - the U.N. Food and Agricultural Organisation and the World Food

Programme - was tardy and was also clouded both by super power geopolitics and by political and bureaucratic wranglings within and among the main donor agencies. (For accounts of the Ethiopian famine of 1984-1985 see, e.g., Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commisssion (RRC) Reports, October 1984 and October 1985; Hancock, 1985; Clay and Holcombe, 1985; Gill 1986; King, 1986; Janssen, 1987; Penrose, 1987; Smith, 1987; Goyder and Goyder, 1988; Rahmato, 1988, and 1991.)

In October 1984 the RRC estimate of the number of people seriously suffering from starvation was put at 7.7 million; 2.6 million, or more than one-third, of those at risk were Wollo peasants (Rahmato, 1991). Although it is unlikely that the human (or animal) death toll will ever be known, estimates of the human death toll during 1984 and 1985 vary from 400,000 (Rahmato, 1991:108), 500,000 (Janssen, 1987:74), to 1,000,000 (King, 1986:36; see also Gill, 1986; and World Bank, 1985).

During the Ethiopian famine of 1972-74, less than a decade earlier, the world was shocked by the international television coverage of the starving masses at Korem feeding centre in northern Wollo, and by the revelation of the deliberate attempt by Emperor Haile Selassie to conceal the famine from both the Ethiopian people and the international community alike. Estimates of the human death toll during the famine - which affected the northern provinces of Wollo, Tigray, Gondar, and northern Shoa during 1972/73 and the southeastern province of Harerghe in 1973/74 - vary between 40,000 and 200,000.[1] (For accounts of the Ethiopian famine of 1972-1974 see, e.g., Cliffe, 1974; Shepherd, 1975; Miller and Holt, 1975; Hussein, 1976; Sen, 1981.) The famine was a significant contributory factor in the revolutionary upheaval that overtook the country in 1974 and the subsequent collapse of the absolutist rule of Emperor

Haile Selassie that had spanned a period of almost fifty years.

In attempting to explain the causes of famine, the literature on famine points to different factors. This list of causes includes: neo-Malthusian population growth; drought; environmental degradation; limited technology; poor savings and investment infrastructures; capitalist development, or the lack of it; war; and the nature of the state, blamed either for lack of intervention or, on the contrary, for too much intervention.

However, to attempt to determine how causation of famine might be quantitatively apportioned between the different factors listed in the debates on causes of famine is of limited value, precisely because the factors that promote famine - drought, environmental degradation, economic decline, war - are so inextricably intertwined. Moreover, famine is not simply predetermined by the factors that the debate on causes items. People's own actions and what people choose to do also shapes the outcome and future strategies for survival.

Our concern is with famine in the case study areas, but our concern is not with debating the causes of famine as much as with identifying consequences. The purpose of our research was to seek answers to the following questions: What were the <u>effects</u> of the array of forces at work on people's strategies for survival during, and after, the 1984/5 famine? What strategies did people pursue in the circumstances that existed during the famine of the mid-1980's? What was the end result of those actions, and what were the consequences for people's ability to recover? And, finally, "what feasible opportunities exist for changing a situation where inordinately large numbers of people go hungry?" (Jayawardena, 1990: vii)

In the rest of this chapter we establish the historical context for the empirical studies. In the following section we briefly describe the geophysical characteristics of the country. The remainder of the chapter discusses the changing historical nature of the state and what these changes meant for the broad peasant masses.

Chapters II and III are the empirical chapters. In Chapter II we document the resource base in which people sought to survive at the time of the survey. The Chapter discusses the following themes: access to, control over, and use of resources; and, the social relationships that condition these, including, state-peasant relations, the relationships between the Peasant Association (PA) leaders and PA members, inter-household relations, and the relationships between men and women. This then provides the context for the discussion in Chapter III which describes the strategies pursued by people in the study areas during the 1984/5 famine, and the outcome of those actions. In the aftermath of the famine, and in contradistinction to the automatic notions of recovery - falsely posed - in much of the literature on famine 'coping' mechanisms, many people in the study areas found themselves in situations that were wholly new to them and we discuss the new options facing people in this wholly new situation. This means inventing a methodology whereby we go back and forth in time to describe the overall effects of the array of forces on people's future strategies for survival. These themes are brought together in Chapter IV, the concluding chapter, in which we summarize our findings and conclude with a brief discussion on the policy implications of these findings.

I.1 PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

Ethiopia[2] is situated in the hinterland of the Horn of Africa, bordered to the north and west by Sudan, to the

northeast by Eritrea, and to the south by Kenya and Somalia. To the east it faces Djibouti and Somalia. Elevations vary from 100 metres below sea level in the Dallol Depression to 4620 metres on the peak of Ras Dashen in the Simien Mountains. The country consists of two highland massifs, bordered by lowlands on the east and west. In the south, the highlands are bisected by the East Africa Rift Valley, within which lie a series of lakes.

Ethiopia is located in the tropics. Differences in altitude produce considerable regional variations in both climate and vegetation. Vegetation varies from thornbush and savannah grasslands in the lowlands to tropical montane forest in the highlands. Deforestation is estimated to have reduced tree cover from around 40 per cent of the surface area in the early 1900s to around 5.6 per cent in 1988 (FAO, 1986, cited in Wood 1992: 187). A consequence of deforestation - which is said to be especially severe in the northern and eastern highlands - is shortage of fuelwood and an increased dependence on the use of crop residue and dung for fuel rather than for soil fertilization. According to the World Bank (1984, cited in Wood, 1992: 187-188) dung and crop residues, together, provide up to 55 per cent of domestic energy and are the dominant fuel source for one third of the population.

The main (kerempt) rainy season occurs between mid-June and late September; the less predictable 'small (belg) rains' fall some time between February and April. Webb (1993: 34), in his recent assessment of rainfall trends in Ethiopia, estimates that there has been only a small decline in overall rainfall trend during the past 25 years, but fluctuations around the mean between years and between regions have been large. During the famine year of 1984, for example, annual rainfall was 22 per cent

below the long-term mean at the national level and most regions suffered (ibid.).

Traditionally, Ethiopians classify the land into three major zones: dega, the highlands, which begin at approximately 2300 metres; woyna dega, the lower highlands, between 1600 and 2300 metres; and k'olla, the lowlands, below 1600 metres. The great majority of the population live in the woyna dega zone. In the lowlands, the dominant systems of production are pastoralism and agro-pastoralism, whilst, in the middle and higher regions, agriculture and agropastoralism predominate.

According to the 1984 Ethiopian Census, the population was then estimated at 42 million[3] and was expected to reach 50 million by 1990. (Ethiopia. Population Census, 1984) Under the Transitional Government that took power from the Mengistu regime in May 1991, the country's regional administrative boundaries were redrawn on the basis of ethnicity. Eritrea's claimed (de facto) independence from Ethiopia, following the collapse of the Mengistu government, became de jure on the 23rd of May, 1993.

Cultural and ethnic diversity characterize much of Ethiopia. There are said to be at least 80 ethnic groups, and nearly a hundred languages spoken, many with additional regional or other dialects. The main languages can be divided into four groups, the Semitic, Cushitic, Omotic and Nilotic. Amharic, a Semitic language, has functioned as the official language of the Ethiopian state.

The centralisation of power within Ethiopia and Amhara dominance have been causes of social and political unrest and the 'nationalities' problem is a major consideration in domestic policies. It has resulted in crippling human and financial costs, including civil war,

major military expenditure, years of aggravated famine conditions and the loss of government control over large tracts of the country.

Since the conversion to Coptic Christianity in 333 A.D. (Semere Haile, 1988:12; Tedesse Tamrat, 1972) by the ancient kindom of Axum, founded in the highlands of Tigray, Orthodox Christianity has functioned as the official religion. However, the Islamic religion is widely practiced, with an estimated one-third of the population thought to be Muslim. Other religious groups include, animists, Protestants, Roman Catholics and Felasha or 'Ethiopian Jews'. (Ethiopia. Population Census, 1984.)

The changing historical nature of the state, the forms whereby it incorporated different nationalities, religions and cultures provide a backcloth to understanding the politics of food security and famine. But in sketching in that background it is important to try to divine what changing state forms meant to the peasant mass and their prospects for food security.

I.2 HISTORY OF STATE FORMATION AND CONSOLIDATION

Ethiopia' can trace its origins back to the ancient Axsumite Kingdom which emerged in the highland plateau of Tigray over two thousand years ago; and to the Abyssinian Kingdom, the political entity that emerged in the northern highland areas of Ethiopia in the 13th century following the decline of the Axsumite kingdom in the 10th century, and the collapse of the Zagwe Dynasty (1135-1270). Yet, as the following observation by Gebru Tareke (1991:xi) shows, the chronicles of this history concentrate on kings and powerful men. What is obscured is the wars of survival of the masses.

> "The affinity between the warlords who created dynasties and built kingdoms and the theologians who constructed dynastic legends and ideological precepts to validate kingly authority is quite striking. It is no surprise, then, that what we know about Ethiopia since the thirteenth century, when the manuscripts known as the "royal chronicles" began to be written, is almost exclusively the record of the thoughts and activi-ties of these two privileged groups. In the back-ground there have always been the multitude of toiling peasants of whom we have had only tantalising glimpses."

The 16th century marked a major turning point in the history of the Abyssinian kingdom. The empire began to disintegrate under the twin assaults of a Muslim jihad (c. 1506-1543) and the Oromo diaspora which began at the turn of the 16th century and continued into the late 18th century. (Levine, 1974; Ullendorf, 1973.) There then followed a period of almost three centuries - 'The Era of the Princes' (zemene mesafint) - until the reign of Menelik in the late 19th early 20th century, during which there was little or no effective central authority. At first local and later regional warlords established their own kingdoms and engaged in incessant warfare with each other for overall dominance of the northern highlands. (Abir, 1968; Pankhurst, 1968.)

By the mid-19th century three major kingdoms had emerged, Tigray, Shoa, and a north western kingdom based on Gondar including most of highland Begemder. With the accession of Menelik to the throne in 1896 the dominance of the northern Amhara-Tigray was shifted to the southern Amhara of Shoa. During his reign as King of Shoa, and later as Emperor combining the three kingdoms, Menelik, through military conquest of the south and south-eastern areas of Ethiopia during the late 19th century more than doubled the area of the Ethiopian empire. At the famous battle

of Adwa in 1896 Menelik's army defeated an Italian invasionary force and succeeded in preserving the empire (although Eritrea became an Italian colony in 1890) from western colonialism until the Italian occupation of the country during the period 1935-1941. (Marcus, 1975; Hiwet, 1975; Markakis, 1974; Alemayehu Bezabih, 1981.)

For the most part Menelik's conquests[5] of the southern territories of Ethiopia were brutal with much destruction of life and property, although in some cases local rulers were given the opportunity to submit peacefully. Consolidation of imperial authority in the southern conquest areas was achieved through a variety of means and included a major redistribution of land from the indigenous peasantry to the conquering northern settlers, the establishment and control of provincial bureaucracies, and the construction of garrison towns (Ketemas) which were manned by Amhara-Tigrean soldiers (neftegna). These Ketemas later became administrative centres, housing delegates of the crown, their families and other settlers. (Perham, 1969; Hiwet, 1975; Markakis, 1974; Donham, 1985.)

Those who benefited from these southern conquests were soldiers, from the rank of privates to generals, royal retainers, the church, and local rulers (balabbats), who were rewarded for their services and loyalty with grants of land and/or the right to collect and retain tributes (gult) from the conquered peasantry. The effect of Menelik's imperial rule on land relations is discussed in greater detail below, for it was this dimension which was most determinant of peoples fate.

Menelik's reign also led to the introduction of a modest modernization programme (e.g. the construction of the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway, the opening of postal and banking (Bank of Abyssinia in 1905) services, and the establishment of a few manufacturing enterprises). Other

developments included the establishment of a professional and salaried army.

I.3 LAND AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

Analysts of Ethiopia'a prerevolutionary landholding systems differentiate between the rist, kinship, tenures that pertained in the northern highlands of Ethiopia (i.e., those areas of predominantly Amhara-Tigrean settlement, Tigray, Gondar, Gojjam, northern Wollo, northern Shoa, and parts of highland Eritrea); the diesa, village based, tenures found in parts of Eritrea; and the 'fuedal' land relations introduced by the imperial state in the southern, conquest, regions of the country around the the turn of the century. To understand better the importance of landholding and access to land for survival and food security it is necessary to consider briefly these historical patterns of landholding.

Under the traditional rist system, the predominant pattern of landholding that pertained in the northern highland areas, there were two basic types of rights to land, rist rights and gult rights.[7] Rist rights were hereditary usufruct rights which were shared by a 'descent corporation' (Hoben, 1973: 98-129). Rist rights could be transferred through both parents and through marriage. Anyone who could establish his/her position in the descent group had inalienable rights to a segment of the group's land. Not only was there a built-in security mechanism in this type of system; it was also an integral part of the traditional social and economic structures of society. (Hoben, 1973; Markakis, 1974; Cohen and Weintraub, 1975; Stahl, 1974). As such, peasants have historically resisted government attempts to alter the system significantly.

In contrast to rist, gult refers to land from which one can collect tribute and taxes. Gult rights were granted

by the emperor, or by provincial rulers who were empowered to make such grants, and were given to members of the nobility as a reward for loyal service to the crown and to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church as endowment. In return for these privileges, the gult holder provided judicial and administrative services on behalf of the crown or the provincial governor. Gult land normally encompassed rist land. The size of the gult area, which theoretically was held at the emperor's pleasure and was non-hereditary, could vary substantially according to the holder's importance. In practice, some gult areas were virtually hereditary (rist gult) or would remain within the extended family (Hoben, 1973: 188; Pankhurst, 19 : 135). The most valuable rist gult land was that which was arable and under intense cultivation. The gult system imposed heavy burdens on the peasantry and was open to corruption. John Markakis (1974: 80) describes the process of tribute extraction as it existed in the rist landholding areas before the tax and administrative reforms described below were introduced in the early 1940's:

> "The tribute extracted from the peasantry in the form of taxes, fees, and labour was appropriated by the various levels of the ruling hierarchy, both secular and ecclesiastical. Each level retained a share and passed on a fixed amount to the higher level.....the process of determination and collection of the tribute was left in the hands of the local governors, who also appropriated the largest portion of the tribute. This arrangement affected the peasantry adversely, for it put it at the mercy of those whose income depended on the amount of tribute they collected. It was customary for the officials to exploit their advantage and turn taxation into extortion."

Under the diesa system, found in parts of the Eritrean highlands, the landholding pattern was based on land use rights derived on the basis of village membership.[8] The social implications of tribute extraction in the diesa landholding areas were broadly similar to that described above for the rist landholding areas.

During the 1960s when the need for land reform was recognized, the main failing of the rist system as perceived by academics, agriculturalists, economists, and planners alike was that the system fostered extensive land fragmentation. These constraints, in turn, prohibited peasant investment in production and undermined peasant incentives to conserve environmental resources. (Brietzeke, 1975; Fassil Gebre Kiros, 1980; and 1986; Desalegn Rahmato, 1984). The issue of land fragmentation is discussed in the context of the case study areas in Chapter II.

In the southern territories added to the empire during Menelik's reign, upon ocupation of an area between two-thirds and three-quarters of all land was confiscaded from the indigenous population by the emperor and portions were granted as gult to Amhara-Tigray settler-soldiers and administrators. Roughly a third of the land was given as gult to soldiers and officers involved in the conquest, and to governors and royal retainers loyal to the crown (Wood, 1983: 513; Pankhurst, 1966: 135-148). Gult was also given to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church to encourage proselytization of the largely pagan and Muslim populations. In certain areas, mainly those areas that did not resist conquest, gult grants were given to local indigenous rulers, balabbats. In return, balabbats were expected to undertake administrative roles and mediate between the occupation forces and the peasantry. Land not distributed as gult was reserved for the emperor.

In theory, gult grants were held at the pleasure of the emperor, although Donham (1985: 39) has estimated that one-third or one-quarter of settled lands in the south[8] were given as hereditary gult to local balabbats. The size of the tributes exacted from peasants in this way could range from one- to more than two-thirds of the annual harvest. In addition to these tributes, peasants provided corvée labour, and were subjected to a plethora of petty taxes and fees. (See, for example, Markakis, 1974, and 1977; Stahl, 1974; Hiwet, 1975; Cohen, 1973; Cohen and Weintraub, 1975;) The policy of doling out land and gult grants as rewards for loyalty to the crown was continued by Haile Selassie.[9] The 'unsettled' land in the extreme peripheral areas of the empire was also considered government land and remained so until the government saw fit to dole out some of this land as land grants or to put portions of it under cultivation as state enterprises. This 'unsettled' land, in practice, was used by pastoralists. (Bondestam, 1974; Kloos, 1977; Donham, 1985.)

The heavy burdens on cultivators and the general poverty of the peasantry reduced the ability of many peasants to cope with the immediate impact of harsh climatic conditions or to make their own recovery from them.

Fiscal and Administrative Reforms 1941-1967

In the early 1940's Haile Selassie introduced several administrative reforms and tax laws. These reforms were an attempt to increase the amount of state revenues from the agricultural sector and were designed to undermine the political and economic power base of the provincial nobility. In 1942 the government introduced a fixed legal tax, abolished corvée labour, and regulated the functions of provincial governors and other provincial officials. Taxes were to be paid in cash and were to be collected by officials of the Ministry of Finance instead

of the provincial nobility. The latter were granted a regular salary and were forbidden to impose taxes and dues other than those legally fixed by the government.[10]

In addition, provincial governors were made accountable to the Ministry of the Interior and prohibited from directly appointing officials to provincial administrative posts. The appointment of provincial officials was controlled by Haile Selassie personally. With few exceptions[11] the post of provincial governor-general was given to Shoans with proved loyalty to the crown. Further reforms included the redrawing of provincial boundaries. A proposal to introduce the measurement of land and a land tax based on size and fertility provoked a revolt in Gojjam and violent opposition in Tigray and Begemeder such that the emperor, in 1944, issued a second proclamation exempting these provinces, hereditary gult land and church land from measurement and reducing the tax rate for unmeasured land.[12]

While these reforms curtailed the independence of the provincial nobility and theoretically relieved the burden of taxation on the peasantry, significantly, the emperor did not initially attempt to curtail directly the privileges of the nobility. Taxes were not levied on land owned, but on land under cultivation; only those who worked the land were taxed for it, and unused land was not subject to tax. This meant that the heaviest tax burden fell on to the peasantry. (Stahl, 1974; Markakis, 1974; Schwab, 1972; Cohen and Weintraub, 1975.) At the same time the existing landlord-tenant relations and the peasant-gult lord relations remained unchanged. As Wood (1983: 528) notes:

> "these new demands by central government were placed on the peasants even as they continued

to hold their traditional obligations to the local elite."

No further attempts to significantly alter the tax burden on the peasantry were made until the enactment of the Land Tax (Amendment) of 1966 which abolished gult; and the Income Tax (Amendment) of 1967 which abolished the tithe. Under the 1966 Amendment, taxes were to be paid directly to the government. The tax payer was to receive a receipt of payment and was recognized as the legal owner of the land. However, contrary to the intentions of the law, in many cases peasants in the southern territories were reduced to the status of tenants. Gult holders simply paid the taxes, which they continued to collect from the peasants, in their own name and became the legal owners of the land. It is estimated that between 65 to 80 per cent of the peasants in the southern provinces were tenants.[13]

Absentee landlordism, and tenancy, in the northern provinces at that time is generally considered by analysts of Ethiopia's land tenures to have been rare. The implicit assumption of these writers is that land relations in these northern areas remained 'traditional'. In contrast, McCann (1986), in his study of the rist land relations in Lasta, northern Wollo, clearly indicates that rist land relations were undergoing fundamental changes as early as the 1920's and 1930's. Because of scarcity of land, children were no longer treated equally in terms of land inheritance. The system was shifting to one where only the eldest, or favoured, son inherited land. This study highlights the extent to which an increasing number of northerners were dependent on wage labouring in the Sudan, Eritrea, and in the coffee growing areas of southern Ethiopia. An indication of the measure of these changes is given by Cliffe (1976: 9):

"Some measure of the extent of these changes can be estimated by the fact - that in one of the provinces most hit by drought in 1973, Wollo, there were about a quarter of a million landless families, not counting those who were tenant farmers. And Wollo and Tigre also provide many thousands of seasonal cotton-pickers and coffee-pickers who went for casual work on large scale plantations elsewhere.

Food Security

In the 1950's and 1960's the government began to promote the development of commercial agriculture. These policies - designed to increase the level of foreign exchange earnings - emphasized export-oriented agricultural production and the promotion of large-scale commercial enterprises. In line with this policy, the government offered every possible encouragement to foreign investors. The area of concentration for capitalist agricultural investment was the valley of the Awash river, the traditional grazing lands of the Afar. Major concessionaries, such as the Tendaho Cotton Plantation (the British based firm of Mitchell Cotts) and the Wonji Sugar Plantation (managed by HVA, a Dutch company) were granted large tracts of irrigatible land at nominal rents. By 1973 about one-third of the total irrigatible land was under cultivation. The Afar grazing area was correspondingly reduced.[14] With respect to this strategy in the Awash Valley, Cliffe (1976 : 10) writes:

"The grazing land that was thus lost was only a small proportion but often the best watered and, more crucially part of a total environment the systematic use of each succeeding part of which was vital to survival, especially in times of drought."

Bondestam (1974: 424) estimates that roughly 25 percent of the Afar pastoralists perished during the drought and famine of 1972-74. The loss of these prime grazing areas was seen by several commentators on the 1972-74 famine as one of the causes of the famine. (e.g. Bondestam, 1974; Kloos, 1982; Koehn, 1979.) While these writers clearly highlight the constraints imposed on the Afar, this single explanation doesn't explain why some Afar were better able to cope with the drought than others, nor does it explain the famine in other areas.

In the mid-1960s, two integrated rural development projects (Chilalo and Wollamo Agricultural Development Units - CADU and WADU) and an agricultural extension programme (Minimum Package Programme - MPP) were initiated to promote peasant agriculture. Tariffs on agricultural machinery and fuel were eliminated while credit was provided through the Agricultural Industrial Development Bank (AIDB) from the World Bank.

The areas chosen for pilot MPP projects, CADU and WADU were all in southern areas with high rates of tenancy. Although initially designed to promote smallholder production, the projects failed to reach the target beneficiaries. This was because the existing land tenure relations prohibited peasants from realizing the full benefits of the projects, and because the conditions set by the programme actually prevented most tenants and small farmers who lacked the necessary finances from participating. (Stahl, 1974; Cohen, 1976.)

Between 1967 and 1972 over 20 per cent of the tenants (approximately 5000 families) in the CADU area in Arsi province were evicted as landlords took to mechanized farming (Stahl, 1974: 74-5; see also Cohen, 1976). Similar effects were observed in the Bako MPP project (Wollega), the Shashemane MPP project (Shoa), and Setit

Humera (Begemder) (Stahl, 1974: 115-124 and 133-7; see also Gilkes, 1975; Hussein, 1976).

For those who remained as tenants rents increased as land prices soared. In the CADU area, 56 per cent of the 126 commercial farms that existed in 1972 were owner operated; and 44 per cent were operated by contractors from absentee landlords. (Stahl, 1974: 103-4)

In terms of agricultural production, the schemes did not result in significant increases (Alemayehu Bezabih, 1982: 20). They were important, however, because they showed the future trend of government policy, the development of a new group of commercial farmers, and a trend towards increased landlessness among the peasantry in the project areas.

However, we should not overemphaize the extent of the schemes and of commercial agriculture. The schemes were concentrated in the south and only a few areas were affected, whereas the problems facing peasants in the north - particularly Wollo, Tigray, Gondar, and Eritrea - were neglected. This does not mean that there were no changes taking place in the north. As we described above, an increasing number of northerners were involved in migrancy and the cash nexus.

I.4 THE 1974 REVOLUTION AND AGRARIAN REFORM

During the 1960s discontent with Haile Selassie's rule began to be manifested overtly. In 1960 this dissent took the form of an attempted coup. This was followed by militant student opposition throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. Among the issues given prominence by the students were the need for land reform, and corruption among senior officials. Attempts at reform, such as the landlord-tenant bill were blocked at the parliamentary stage in 1968.[15] The Catastrophic famine

of 1972-4, a marked rise in urban food prices, reinforced by the sharp increase in in costs of all imported goods, especially petroleum products, in early 1974, discontent among students and teachers over proposed educational reforms, guerrilla activity in Eritrea and in Bale, and peasant unrest in the southern provinces set the scene for the military coup that successfully brought to an end the absolutist rule of Emperor Haile Selassie.

In February 1974 a series of strikes in Addis Ababa and a mutiny in the armed forces led to major changes. Ministers were arrested; the government of Aklilu Habte Wold, prime minister since 1961, promptly resigned, and a new prime minister, Lij Endalkachew Mekonen, was appointed with a mandate to carry out reforms. In June the Coordinating Committee of the armed forces, police, and Territorial Army was formed and took direct action resulting in further arrests. Haile Selassie was deposed on 12 September 1974, and the Coordinating Committee of the Provisional Military Government of Ethiopia (PMAC), commonly known as the 'Derg' ('committee'), assumed full governmental powers.

The next four years were marked by bitter and bloody inter-factional fighting over ideological and political control over the revolution both between the two main radical movements - the All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement (MEISON), and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) - and within the 'Derg'. At the forefront of the disputes were the twin issues of Eritrea's right to self-determination, and the establishment of a people's civilian government. The 'Derg', 'ideologically naive' (Markakis, 1981), not surprisingly, initially sided with MEISON, which wanted a Soviet style communist party and, more important, was prepared to accept the necessity for military rule for the time being. The more popular EPRP took an opposite line on the military. It argued for the immediate establishment of a people's civilian government

and supported the Eritrean struggle for self-determination. The disputes between MEISON and the EPRP intensified into urban violence, and the 'Derg', in an attempt to eliminate the EPRP launched a 'red terror' campaign. Between 1977 and 1978 thousands were detained and several thousand were killed. In mid-1977 MEISON also fell foul of the 'Derg'. By late 1978, both organisations were virtually eliminated. The bitter and bloody power struggles within the 'Derg' led to the rise of Mengistu Haile Mariam as Chairman of the PMAC and Head of State in February 1977. (Markakis and Ayele 1978; Markakis, 1981; Haliday and Molyneux, 1981; Ottaway, 1978) In the remainder of this section we highlight the Derg's agrarian policies and reforms.

Land Reform - Policy and Implementation

On 20 December 1974 Ethiopian socialism (Hibrettesebawinet) was declared as the guiding philosophy of the state. Ethiopian socialism as defined by the 'Derg' meant "equality, self-reliance, the dignity of labour, the supremacy of the common good and the indivisibility of Ethiopian Unity." (Cited in Penrose, 1987: 107) In early 1975 the PMAC announced their first measures of nationalisation, imposition of state controls and land reform.

Land reform is generally regarded as the most important policy of the 'Derg's' early period. Among the many groups that were active during the early days of the revolution there was a consensus on the need for land reform; it was the nature of reform that was a subject of controversy and discussion. (See, e.g.; Cohen, 1981; and Stahl, 1977.) To a significant extent the land reform was preempted by a recognition of the realities in the south. In the southern provinces the peasants had already begun to take over their lands during the months leading up to the revolution. (Markakis and Ayele 1978;

Markakis, 1981; Ottaway, 1978) Of no less significance was the 'Derg's' determination to win the support of radical groups agitating for land reform. Prior to the revolution the slogan of student activists was Merét larashu, or 'Land to the tiller'. The implementation of this slogan was the main legitimizing measure undertaken by the 'Derg'.

On March 4 1975,[16] all rural land was nationalised without compensation; tenancy, all rents, 'feudal' obligations and past debts were abolished; the hiring of wage labour on private farms was forbidden; sale or rent of land was prohibited; peasants were given usufructuary rights; and a ceiling of 10 hectares was imposed on the size of landholdings.

Commercial farms were also nationalized and in general became state farms, although some became co-operatives and others were divided into small plots for landless peasants. In the lowland pastoral areas, pastoral communities were given possessory rights over land they used for grazing. (Koehn and Koehn, 1977: 3-61; Brietzke, 1976; Koehn, 1979; Alemayehu Bezabih, 1982.)

Thus, in theory, the land reform provided for better land access and to full entitlements for the poor, and for the redistribution of rural incomes.

Peasant associations (PAs) were to assist in the land redistribution and thousands of senior secondary school and university students were sent to the rural areas on a government sponsored campaign (zemecha) to mobilize and organize the peasantry. The students were also responsible for establishing locally elected peasant associations and for organizing literacy campaigns . PAs were to be established for each 800 hectares of land and membership was to be made up of tenants, landless labourers, and landowners with less than 10 hectares.

Owners with more than 10 hectares could become members only after their land had been redistributed.

In the south, the students began to implement changes that were more radical than those called for by the land reform. They excluded former officials and landlords from holding any office, favoured tenants, redistributed oxen, attempted to establish collective farms, and tried to arm the peasants. In their eagerness to foster peasant self-assertion and to rid the countryside of landlords and officials, the students came increasingly into conflict with the military regime which depended on the existing state structure to maintain control of the country. In some areas the students were ordered back to Addis Ababa, and Ministry of Land Reform officials were assigned to each woreda (sub-provincial district) to supervise the implementation of the land reform and the organization of the peasant associations. (Markakis and Ayele, 1978; Markakis, 1981; Haliday and Molyneux, 1981; Ottaway, 1978; Alemayehu Bezabih, 1982.)

In the northern areas, where the rist system predominated, peasants reacted with little enthusiasm and in some areas even opposed the land reform. There was also significant opposition to the land reform by the Afar in the Awash valley. This opposition was led by Sultan Ali Mirah, and other tribal leaders, in response to the proposed nationalisation of their vast commercial farms. (Ottaway, 1978; Alemayehu Bezabih, 1982; Markakis and Ayele, 1978; Haliday and Molyneux, 1981.)

Data on the size of PA units and on the average holdings of members is scarce (Cohen and Isaksson, 1988), although it is generally known that in practice the size of PA units varied from locality to locality. (e.g. Desalegn Rahmato, 1984.) The popular notion of the land reform, held by people like Dessalegn Rahmato (1984, 1988, 1991, and 1992), for instance, is that the land reform

equalized rural communities. According to Rahmato (1984: 49):

> "Not only has tenancy as well as landlordism been abolished, but landlessness has also been done away with. In terms of the relationship of the producer to his means of production, all differ-ences have been eliminated, and each peasant now holds usufruct right over the land that he employs for his livelihood. In this sense, rural society has been 'destratified', and inequalities based on the right to labour have been abolished. The "self-managing peasant", to use Marx's term, reproducing himself by his own effort, constitutes the chief element of the social structure of the country-side."

However, Rahmato does not examine, in detail, the relations of reproduction, thus, it is not at all clear how his "self-managing peasant" reproduces himself. He sees the household as an autonomous, and undifferentiated, unit. His definition of the 'self-managing peasant' is gender-blind, as is his assumed equal rights to labour. As we shall see in Chapter II, although men had rights over women's labour in the study areas, women had no rights over their husband's labour. He further assumes that land is the primary source of social differentiation, thus, the importance of other crucial means of production - such as oxen and labour - as sources of social differentiation in rural communities is downplayed. Interestingly, he further adds:

> "In general, land reform has not brought about significant changes in the status of a great majority of peasants in terms of size of holdings..... The real benefit of land reform must therefore be sought.....in the guarantee to rural property that it has assured to every peasant." (ibid.)

Yet, the same author, in subsequent writings (Dessalegn Rahmato, 1988, 1991, and 1992) argues that increasing population pressure, and the need to constantly redistribute land to newly emerging households, has meant that peasants can have their land taken away from them from one season to the next. This contradiction appears to have gone unnoticed by the author.

Rahmato's concept of reproduction is too simplistic. We need to distinguish between the different elements of social reproduction: the reproduction of the farming system; the reproduction of the labour force, including the material reproduction of labour; and human biological reproduction (see, e.g., Edholm, et. al., 1977); and to examine the social relations that determine these.

Peasant Associations

In addition to the distribution of land, PAs were empowered to establish marketing and producer co-operatives, adjudicate land disputes, maintain law and order, initiate or co-operate with the government in local development projects, and to administer and conserve public property. (Brietzke, 1976; Alemayehu Bezabih, 1982.) Elective, sub-district (woreda), district (awraja), and provincial associations were created; and in 1978 the All-Ethiopia Peasants Association (AEPA) was established. However, the PAs were primarily mass organizations outside the administrative apparatus, and were never integrated into the national policy-making system. (Alemayehu Bezabih, 1982; Clapham, 1989;) According to Markakis (1981: 23):

> "At the highest levels, the Supreme Economic Council includes the entire top officialdom of the administrative and military apparatus, but has only one representative from the ..... All-Ethiopia Peasant Association. However the AEPA

> representive is not included in the executive committee of the council. The same holds true for the corresponding organs at the provincial and sub-provincial levels."

However, as Alemayehu Bezabih (1982: 73) notes:

> "Despite the localized and atomized structure of PAs they have demonstrated an impressive capability not only to organize local administration but to initiate and sustain small- scale development projects on their own or in co-operation with central government agencies."

For the most part, information on the social backgrounds of PA leadership suggests that, in many areas, the leaders were chosen from among the most literate members of the community and, thus, in all likelihood from among the wealthier members of the community. (See, e.g., Alemayehu Bezabih, 1982; Stahl, 1989; Pankhurst, 1992.) Accounts of the mismanagement of funds due to the general lack of simple accounting skills and reports on the incidence of bribery are not uncommon (Alemayehu Bezabih, 1982: 73)

Towards the end of the decade the functions of the peasant associations were further expanded to include the implementation of the 'Derg's' economic and political policies. These included: the enforcement of state imposed taxes and grain quotas, the provision of military conscripts; and the implementation of government villagisation and resettlement programmes (see below). In the general perception of the PAs, and in the literature, the PAs are seen as mere vehicles for top-down-directives. According to Clapham (1989), for instance, the PAs became state adjuncts.

While there was clearly an inherent tension in the mediating role of PA leaders, what Clapham, amongst others, fails to examine is the way in which the increased functions and responsibility of the PA leaders increased the leadership's control over local resources and created the conditions for the PA leaders to accumulate resources in their own interest. This issue is discussed further within the context of the case studies in Chapter II.

Food Security

In September 1978, on the 4th anniversary of the revolution, the 'Derg' proclaimed the first of its annual National Revolutionary Production and Cultural Development Campaigns. The campaign was the 'Derg's' first venture in the field of economic reconstruction since the nationalisation proclamations of 1975. The campaign was prompted by what Mengistu himself described as "a frightening situation in urban areas regarding the shortages of food' (cited in Markakis, 1981: 22) and rising urban food prices.

The food shortages at that time are generally seen to be the effects of a combination of factors including the disruption of production and distribution due to the war with Somalia and Eritrean movements. According to Alemayehu Bezabih (1982: 92 f.31), for instance:

> "Agricultural production in Eritrea, Bale and Hararghe regions was severely disrupted and by mid-1978 over half-a-million people were in war rehabilitation centres."

Other factors affecting marketed production were increased peasant consumption from what was previously the land-owners share (Cohen and Isaksson, 1988; Markakis, 1981; Ghose, 1985; Saith, 1985 Alemayehu

Bezabih, 1982); and a shortage of consumer goods for which peasants trade their produce (Markakis, 1981). An additional factor was the rapid expansion of the military during 1977 and 1988 which placed greater demands on the available marketed surplus (Alemayehu Bezabih 1982: 76; Markakis 1981).

The 'Derg' attempted to deal with both the distribution and production problems by increasing its monopoly over marketing through the imposition of compulsory grain quotas and controls on private traders, and through the establishment of state farms and the promotion of producer cooperatives. These policies were designed to enhance state control over the agricultural sector and to maintain urban support by increasing the volume of marketed output while keeping urban prices low. (Lirenzo, 1984; Cohen and Isaksson, 1988; Ghose, 1985; Griffin and Hay, 1985.)

Peasants were forced to contribute a quota of grain at fixed prices to the Agricultural Marketing Board (AMC). Quotas were set for each region by the Grain Purchase Task Force and passed down through district administrative levels to service cooperatives and peasant associations. The PA leaders were responsible for the allocation of quotas to PA members which, in practice, gave them a monopoly over marketing at the local level. It is estimated that the prices paid to peasants on AMC quota deliveries were on average less than half the market price. (Lirenzo, 1984; Cohen and Isaksson, 1988.) For households already short of food these quotas further reduced the amount of food and/or income available to these households.

In addition to grain quotas peasants were required to pay taxes and 'contributions' to local and national campaigns such as defence, famine relief, and local development projects. Land use fees and agricultural income taxes,

initially set quite low, gradually increased. Land use fees, for example, increased from ETB. 10, to 20 and to ETB. 30 (Lirenzo, 1984). Land use fees were uniformly applied, irrespective of size of landholding. The implications of these fixed land use fees for the food security of households, especially the poorer community members, are obvious. While peasants gain from paying fixed rates, as opposed to proportional rates, in a good harvest year, fixed rates during a poor harvest year can mean that peasants are forced to sell what little grain they have -, or some other asset - just to meet the payment. As we shall see in Chapter II, this failure to graduate land use fees according to size of landholding was bitterly resented by informants.

In addition to the introduction of quotas, traders were forced to deliver, depending on area specific regulations, from 50 to 100 per cent of their purchases to the AMC. In general, traders were forced to deliver 40 per cent of their purchases to the AMC, however, in Arsi, Bale, and Gojjam - the traditional surplus producing areas - all private grain trade was banned (Cohen and Isaksson, 1988: 332; see also Griffin and Hay, 1985; and Lirenzo, 1984). Internal customs barriers and the policing of provincial borders were used to prevent blackmarketeering and the inter-regional movement of grain. This meant that peasants in grain deficit areas were forced to pay high grain prices, while peasants in surplus areas - subject to demand and supply - were forced to accept low prices for their produce.

State farms at the time of the land reform were established from existing large commercial enterprises. The expansion of the state farm sector from the late 1970s onwards was partly ideological in that the 'Derg' saw state farms as a means of moving towards an integrated set of socialist agricultural strategies. The willingness of Soviet Bloc countries to provide financial

and technical support for such farms was also influential (Wood, 1983). But, crucially, state farms provided a reliable marketable surplus of food grains for urban areas and for the expanding military bureaucracy since almost the entire output of this sector was marketable. (Griffin and Hay, 1985; Wood, 1983; Cohen and Isaksson, 1988.) As Ghose (1985: 137) notes:

> "The government, furthermore, sought to acquire direct control of a part of the marketed output so as to be in a position to determine its distribution"

According to Cohen and Isaksson (1984: 328), shortly after the land reform state farms accounted for around 67,000 hectares, by 1983 the area under state farms had increased to 222,000 hectares, or 3.5 per cent of total cultivated area, and was scheduled to expand to 500,000 hectares by 1994. According to Ghose, 1985: 135) between 1980 and 1985 state farms were allocated about 40 per cent of all government agricultural sector spending, and accounted for only 4 to 5 per cent of total agricultural spending. In 1982, for instance, state farms received 95 per cent of improved seed allocation, 80 per cent of credit, and 76 per cent of fertilizer.

In the early directives on PAs issued after the revolution, among the tasks given to the PAs was the promotion of collective farms. PAs were encouraged to set aside communal land for collective cultivation. In the new directives on Producer cooperatives issued in 1979, the new policy was to promote group farming, or 'collectivisation', as the sole form of production. The producer cooperatives were conceived as rural production cooperatives, in which the means of production - initially land - was held communally. Three stages of cooperation were envisaged: melba, welba, and weland, representing progressive increases in joint ownership of

the means of production, the last stage involving a larger scale of operations and the inclusion of livestock as a socialized resource. In theory, producer cooperatives were to supersede the PAs (Cohen and Isaksson, 1988; Stahl, 1989; Wood, 1983.)

While the formation of producer cooperatives was supposedly voluntary, over a thousand, hastily trained "production cadres" were deployed in the countryside to educate the peasants as to the benefits of collectivisation. Those willing to join were given incentives of various kinds, including access to the better land within the PAs, and preferential access to state inputs and extension services. (Stahl, 1989; Ghose, 1986; Alemayehu Bezabih, 1982.) The official goal was to have half the country's cultivated land worked by producer cooperatives in 1994. However, Ghose (1986: 130) estimates that in 1986 producer cooperatives accounted for less than 2 per cent of the cultivated area and for just over one per cent of country's peasant families. The failure of producer cooperatives to take-off is generally attributed to the element of coercion used by officials in promoting the collectives, a lack of management and technical skills, and the generally low levels of productivity achieved by the farms (Stahl, 1989; Cohen and Isaksson, 1988.).

The failure of producer cooperatives to take-off is seen by some writers as the reason for the 'Derg's' highly controversial villagisation and resettlement programmes (Cohen and Isaksson, 1988). The villagisation Campaign began in late 1985. The official goal, announced the following year, was to move the majority of the rural population into the new villages by 1995. Broadly speaking, villagisation increased the size of rural communities and located the rural population in a planned physical setting, thus simplifying the task of service

provision, tax collection, and control over the population. (Alemayehu Lirenso, 1992.)

During the first phase of the operation, carried out between December 1985 and March 1986, the campaign covered eight regions, the focus being on Shoa, Arsi, and Gondar. At the same time, and on a more limited scale, villagisation started in Gojjam, Sidamo, Welega, Kefa and Illubabor. Villagisation never gained momentum in the northernmost parts of the country where the 'Derg' lacked effective control. By late 1986 an estimated 12 percent of the rural population were resettled into 4500 new villages (Cohen and Isaksson, 1988: 330; Alemayehu Lirenso, 1992.). By 1987, the end of the second phase of the programme, there were 12 regions in which villagisation had occurred. According to official estimates, by 1990 some 40 per cent of the rural population had been villagized (cited in Pankhurst, 1992: 52)

The villagisation programme received considerable criticism in the international press and donor community. In particular the 'Derg' was criticized for instituting so disruptive a programme at a time when the country was still recovering from a terrible famine. Further criticisms focused on the environmental costs of the programme, and on the economic costs for producers in terms of work time lost, increased distance between homesteads and fields, and the failure of the government to deliver the promised social services. (Cohen and Isaksson, 1988;)

The resettlement campaign began in November 1984. The declared goal of the programme was to move and resettle 1.5 million people from the drought prone areas of the north to the supposedly underutilized areas of Kaffa, Wollega, and Illubabor by the end of 1985. Officials argued that the environmentally degraded north was no

longer capable of supporting its present population. During the period November 1984-January 1986 an estimated 591,227 people from the northern regions of Wollo, Gondar, Tigray, and Gojjam were resettled in the south (Sivini, 1986:227; see also Janssen, 1987). The resettlement programme attracted criticism from international donors and non-governmental organisations engaged in the famine relief effort from the moment it was announced.

In addition to the timing of the programme, critics argued that the operation was badly planned and caused much suffering and a great deal of hardship to the resettlers. The forced, as opposed to the voluntary, resettlement of people, and the environmental consequences of the programme in the receiving areas also came in for a great deal of criticism. (See e.g., Clay and Holcombe, 1986; Survival International, 1985; Cohen and Isaksson, 1988.)

However, while all of the criticisms levelled at the 'Derg' at that time were justified, the logic of the programme was never questioned. Critics unquestioningly accepted the fact that there is degradation of the environment hence the population must be reduced. Moreover, the perceived degradation is assumed to be irreversible. This is not necessarily the case. This is only looking at the problem in terms of land-use, and not in human terms. It is a simplistic two-way population/ environment carrying capacity argument without consideration of the farming system and broader macro conditions. Thus, changes in the farming system and alternative techniques of farming are often not considered.

Throughout this section our discussion has focused on the 'Derg's' policies and the agrarian reforms since the 1974 revolution. These policies also need to be seen

within the context of the secessionist wars in the northeast - Eritrea, Tigre, northern Wollo - and in the southwest of the country and the consequent loss of human life and the massive destruction of productive resources. While the arenas of war were local and geographically specific, nevertheless the effects of the wars were indirectly felt throughout the country - restrictions on mobility, forced conscriptions, and the enormous drain on national resources to support an expanding military bureaucracy.

From 1988 onwards resistance movements, and in particular the Tigrean People's Liberation Front (TPLF), increased their hold in many parts of the country. On 21 May 1991 Mengistu Haile Mariam fled the country and a week later the Ethiopian People's Democratic Front (EPRDF), formed by the amalgamation of the TPLF and other liberation movements, took control of the capital and the country. A national conference on Peace and Democracy held in July endorsed a 20-article charter. The transitional government subsequently set up was headed by the Council of representatives under the presidency of Meles Zenawi.

Policy declarations made in the year preceding the downfall of the 'Derg' showed a movement away from the highly interventionist polices of the previous 14 years, and towards greater economic incentives to the peasantry. (Belshaw, 1991.) Officially this shift in policy was presented as a realization that earlier policies were not delivering. However, these changes in policy can also be seen as having external origins. Pressure had been exerted by the West, in particular the World Bank and the European Economic Community, which were funding development schemes in the country. Finally, the shift can be explained as a response to perestroika and the fundamental changes that were occurring in Eastern European countries. (See, e.g., Polyakov, 1992.)

It was not the purpose of this chapter to examine the rationale of the Mengistu regime's policies, but to provide the historical context for the empirical studies. These policies were heavily interventionist and had major effects on ordinary people. In the following chapter we focus on the array of forces which face people in the case study areas and discuss the resource base in which people sought to survive.

CHAPTER II

THE LOCAL CASE STUDIES

II.1 THE STUDY AREA

The studies were undertaken in the Kallu area of the thensouthern Wollo administrative region. Stretching across an area of 5060.7 square kilometres, Kallu encompasses parts of south-central and south-eastern Wollo. At the time of the 1984 Ethiopian Census the population of Kallu was estimated at 417,000.[1] The peoples inhabiting the area are of the Amhara, Oromo, and Afar, ethnic groups. In 1989, when a new administrative division was introduced throughout the country, the region, formerly known as Kallu awraja, was divided into two, North Kallu awraja, and South Kallu awraja.

Two surveys were undertaken in two peasant associations over a six month period lasting from the end of October 1991 to the end of April 1992. The peasant associations were selected on the basis of their different ecological settings. Thus, one of the two peasant associations selected was Gerbi Peasant Association situated in the eastern lowlands of Kemisse woreda, an administrative sub-district of South Kallu awraja. The second peasant association selected was Ablosh Peasant Association located in the western highlands of Albuco woreda, an administrative sub-district of North Kallu awraja.

II.2 SAMPLE SIZE

In Gerbi Peasant Association, the number of households sampled was 54 (15%). It was also our intention to cover a sample of 50 households (12%) in Ablosh Peasant Association. However, because of political instability in the region at the time of the survey we,

unfortunately, were unable to complete the survey. Thus, the number of households sampled in Ablosh Peasant Association was 23 (5.4%). As a result, the small size of the latter sample makes it more suitable for suggesting hypotheses rather than for testing them.

In both study areas, sample households were selected randomly. 'Households' were identified on the basis of the local, administrative definition of the household as used by the peasant association. However, households are not static entities. In both study areas, several of the respondents were members of different households at the time of the 1983/84 drought and famine. For example, some of the women respondents that were married at the time of the survey were either married to different spouses, or headed their own households at the time of the drought. Similarly, some of the women respondents that headed their own household at the time of the survey were married during the drought. Throughout the discussion, therefore, the sample is adjusted accordingly to take account of the considerable fluidity of households in the study areas.

In addition to the household surveys, in each of the study areas interviews were also held with village elders, ex-peasant association committee members, ex-heads of the women's associations, local extension workers, local ministry of agriculture officials, and members of locally based non-governmental organisations.

II.3. ABLOSH PEASANT ASSOCIATION

Ablosh Peasant Association was located in the western highland region of Albuco, North Kallu awraja. The geographical boundary of the peasant association stretched from the high mountain ranges of the dega zone (i.e. areas of 2500m and above) to the flat lands in the lowland, kolla zone (i.e. areas of 1600m and below).

According to figures provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, the total area covered by the peasant association was estimated at 800 hectares. However, this estimate, along with the estimate for Gerbi Peasant Association (see below), needs to be read with caution.

Although, in theory, peasant associations were officially allocated a land fund of 800 hectares, the boundaries of peasant associations are known to have varied both within and between localities. (See, e.g. Rahmato, 1985) According to ministry of agriculture officials in Kemisse, and Dessie, aerial mapping was used in drawing-up the peasant association boundaries in some parts of Wollo. In other parts of Wollo, the peasant asssociation boundaries were drawn on the basis of negotiation between neighbouring peasant association leaders with help from the ministry of agriculture, but no actual measurement of land took place. Thus, the estimates of the land allocated to the peasant associataions in these latter areas are based largely on 'guesstimates'. In both of the areas under study the latter method was the method used in drawing-up the peasant associations boundaries.

According to survey informants, the peoples inhabiting these highland areas were all Amhara. Interestingly, the people were all Muslim and not, as commonly portrayed in the general literature on the highland Amhara, Christian. According to Mohammed Kalid, the head of the peasant association's Peace and Stability Committee[2], at the time of the survey the association comprised 421 households. Of these, 64 households (15%) were headed by women. The number of single male-headed households was 4 (1%).

The association comprised 6 settlements, each of which was distinguised by an ancestral place name. All 6 settlements were located at altitudes above 2300m. Four of the 6 settlements were sited at altitudes 2500m and

above. The sample households were drawn from 2 settlements, Ablosh, and Ambowenze, located in the higher ranges. Members of settlements were linked through kinship, and had kinship linkages with people living in different settlements and different peasant associations, partly as a result of the past outmigration of family members during times of population expansion or family tensions, and partly as a result of marriage ties.

Typical of the traditional settlement patterns observed elsewhere in Wollo (e.g. McCann, 1986; Rahmato, 1988, & 1991), homesteads were dispersed, scattered in between fields in small clusters of 2 or 3 houses. Houses were in the form of the traditional round house ('tukle'), and were made from a combination of wood, mud, dung, and thatch. Most of the houses had gardens, of varying size, fenced off with cacti, a plant species common to the area. However, the quality of housing among the sample households varied significantly. Of the 23 sample households, 6 households (26%) lived in large, well maintained, tukles with separate sleeping areas. These households also possessed a variety of material goods such as crockery, blankets, and furniture, including, in 3 cases, metal spring beds. Thirteen of the sample households (57%) lived in well maintained tukles, albeit of varying size, but had few material possesions; while 4 of the sample households (17%) were extremely poor with virtually no material possessions and poor quality housing. Seven of the 23 sample households also had small, conicle, or rectangular, shaped secondary houses in which they either kept their animals over night, or used them for storage of grain and/or fodder.

The association's communal dry season grazing areas were located in the highlands; the communal wet season grazing areas were located in the lowlands. Members of the association also cultivated landholdings both in the highlands and in the lowlands. The local measure for

land was a 'timad' which is roughly equivalent to a quarter of a hectare.

We, unfortunately, were not able to gather data on the amount of land allocated within the association to different land uses such as, housing, forests, arable, grazing. This was, in fact, understandable given the timing of the survey. At that time, like many other areas of the country, southern Wollo, and Kallu in particular, was experiencing an escalation of localised conflicts over territorial rights. Moreover, with the collapse of peasant association committees, localised land redistribution was officially the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture. Thus, given people's uncertainty about land rights, land was a particularly sensitive issue and the villagers' reluctance to reveal how much arable and grazing land the association had was highly understandable.

Unlike some peasant associations, Ablosh did not have a producer cooperative. However, in theory, it shared, with several other neighbouring peasant associations, a service cooperative. Service cooperatives were a vehicle for bringing infrastructure and services to rural communities. In addition, up to March 1990, the cooperatives were also used to collect contributions required of the population by the government. (see, e.g., Lirenso, 1984; Saith, 1985; Cohen and Isaksson, 1988; Stahl, 1989.)

Through a nationwide government organization, the Ethiopia Domestic Distribution Corporation, service cooperatives were provided with goods allocated on a rationed, fixed-price distributuion system. In theory, the service cooperatives could procure crop extension services; market the produce of their members as well as produce imported from outside the region; give loans; and provide storage and milling facilities. The shops

sold salt, a basic good, and sugar, a luxury, at almost half the market price. Membership was by household and was voluntary, the use of some of the facilities being denied to those who had not paid their membership fee. Distribution of the goods occurred on a quota basis whenever they were brought in, theoretically once a month, in practice much less regularly. According to informants, when available, the ration was usually about 1.5 kilos of salt and 1 kilo of sugar per household.

However, up to March 1990, service cooperatives were also used to collect the enforced sale by peasant association members of a quota of grain at state prices which were invariably set at below market prices. Following a policy change in March 1990 this system was altered and the Agricultural Marketing Board thereafter had to buy on the open market.

Theoretically, the members of Ablosh peasant association shared a service cooperative located in Albuco. In practice, none of the respondents had ever used the cooperative's facilities. According to informants, to reach the cooperative took some 6 hours on foot and meant travelling over mountainous terrain. However, while the distant location of the cooperative in effect prevented respondents from benefitting from the available services, the latter also enabled peasants to resist the payment of grain quotas. The sanction for non-payment of grain quotas was the withdrawal of the use of the cooperative's facilities. Since the latter were not used by respondents, such sanctions had little weight. This issue of grain quotas is discussed further in Section II. , below.

The nearest town for these highland dwellers was the small, lowland, market town of Morkoy some two hours walking distance down the mountain face. The area was connected to the main north-south highway, some 19 kms.

to the east, by a feeder road. The road, a fairly recent construction, was started during the famine of the mid-1980s as part of a food-for-work project organised by World Vision, an American Baptist mission.

II.4 GERBI PEASANT ASSOCIATION

Gerbi Peasant Association was located in the eastern lowland region of Kemisse, South Kallu Awraja, and fell within the Kolla zone, i.e. areas of 1600m and below. According to figures provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, the total area covered by the peasant association was estimated at 750 hectares.

The peasant association was subjected to villagisation during the first quarter of 1986, shortly after the Mengistu regime's villagisation programme was expanded to include Wollo in 1985. According to the figures provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Dessie, some three per cent of the rural population of Wollo was villagised during the period 1986-1989. After Tigray and Gamo Gofa, Wollo contained the lowest number of the newly established villages (Alemeyehu Lirenso, 1992: 136). The new villages were all built in the southern Wollo administrative region; the programme was never implemented in northern Wollo where the government lacked effective power.

In Gerbi, the association members were all Oromo, and Muslim. Prior to villagisation, the people lived in dispersed settlements, totalling 5 in all, scattered among the surrounding hillsides. As in the highland study, members of settlements were linked through kinship and also had kinship linkages with people living in different settlements, and in different peasant associations. The new village site was a hillside close to the main north-south highway. Some 7kms to the south of village was Kemisse town, the <u>woreda</u> capital.

A much smaller market town, Harbu, was situated some 12 kms to the north of the village.

Three recently constructed, rectangular, brick houses (one of which was still in the process of construction at the time of the survey) owned by 3 of the wealthier members of the community, contrasted sharply with therest of the village houses which were all in the form ofthe traditional round tukle, and were made from a combination of wood, mud, dung, and thatch.

One of the many concerns expressed by critics of the villagisation programme (e.g. Cohen and Isaksson 1987, Alemayehu Lirenso, 1988, Berihun, 1988) was that the increased use of wood for house construction would accelerate deforestation. In Gerbi, respondents reported that, on the insistence of officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, the body responsible for establishing the new village, the houses were transported whole from the old settlements to the new village site on large wooden poles.

All of the labour used in the construction of the new village was provided by members of the peasant association. To transport each house required from 20 to 40 men, depending on the size of the house.

While most of the houses had a fenced-off garden, some of the gardens were noticeably larger than others. Roughly a third of the houses were packed so close together that these households had no room for a garden.

According to the head of the Peace and Stability Committee, Mohammed Abdu, at the time of the survey the association comprised 362 households. Seventy-six (21%) of these households were headed by women. The number of single male-headed households was only one.

As in Ablosh, among the sample households, the quality of housing, and the range of material goods possessed by households, varied significantly. Of the 54 sample households, 15 of these households lived in large, well maintained tukles. Twelve of these households also had secondary houses for keeping animals, or for storing grain and/or fodder. In sharp contrast, 11 of the sample households lived in small, poorly maintained tukles.

The association's communal grazing areas and arable landholdings were located on the surrounding lowland plains. In Gerbi, as in Ablosh, the local land measure was the 'timad' and was roughly equivalent to a quarter of a hectare. Here, as in Ablosh, we were unable to get information on the amount of land allocated by the association to different land use purposes. The association did not have a producer cooperative. However, it shared with several other neighbouring peasant associations, a service cooperative, located in Kemisse.

II. 5 ENVIRONMENT

Rainfall

Throughout most of Wollo there are two rainy seasons. The main, kerempt, autumn, rains fall from mid-July to end-September. The short belg, spring, rains fall from mid-February to end-April. The exceptions are the lower elevation areas along the fringe of the eastern escarpment which receive only the kerempt rains. The bega, dry, season, which follows the kerempt rains and lasts from October to January, also receives some light rains. These latter rains provide an important source of moisture for grazing pastures.

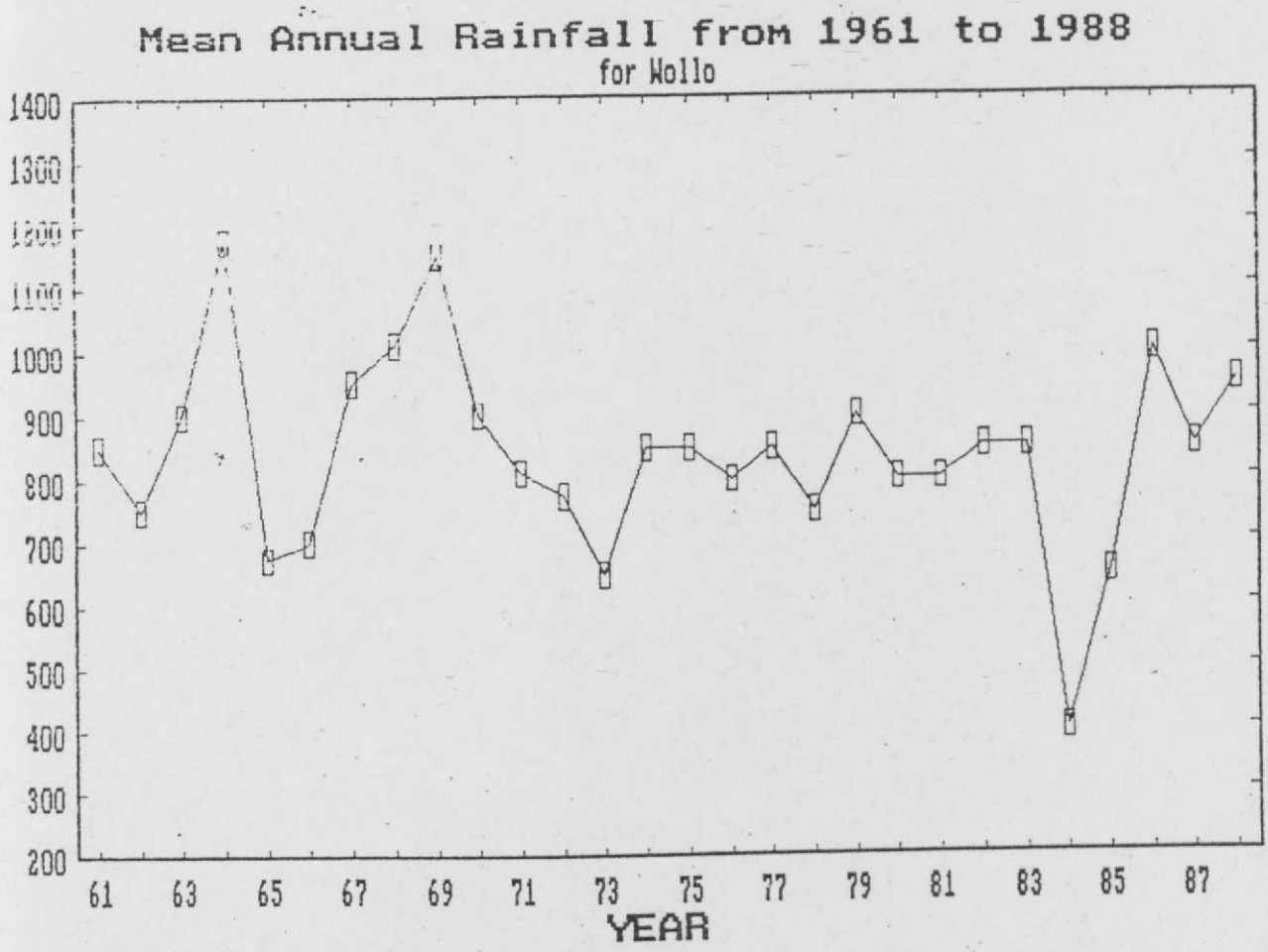
The mean annual rainfall for Wollo for the period 1961-1988 is shown in Figure 1, below. These data are

reproduced from Webb (1993). Average annual rainfall over this 28 year period is estimated at 837mm. However, as the data also show, fluctuations around the mean between years have been large. The 1972-1973 famine was preceded by three consecutive years of below average, and declining, rainfall. Rainfall during the famine year of 1984 was only 47% of the long-term average and was the lowest recorded rainfall for Wollo since 1961. (See also, Degefu, 1986, & 1987; Cutler, 1988.) Rainfall during 1985, although improved, was still well below the long-term average; while 1986 and 1988 were characterised by well above average rainfall. Figure 1, below shows the mean annual rainfall from 1961 to 1968 for Wollo.

In Wollo, as throughout Ethiopia, precipitation varies according to altitude. According to estimates provided by the Ethiopian National Meterological Services Agency, rainfall in the highlands of Wollo ranges from about 600mm at altitudes between 1600-2300m (the woyna dega zone); and from about 700-1300mm at atltitudes of 2400m and above (the dega zone). Average annual rainfall in the lowlands (the qolla zone), ranges from about 200-500mm.

Thus, in theory, both survey sites benefitted from having two harvests. However, informants in Ablosh peasant association, which stretched from the high dega zone (2400m and above) to the lowland qolla zone, had higher average amounts of rainfall and operated within a more diverse micro-climate than survey informants in Gerbi peasant association which fell within the lowland, qolla zone.

However, we also need to examine the timing and pattern of rainfall at the local level. The timing of precipitation (relative to ideal times for planting, germination, and the maturation of crops) is as important as the absolute amount of annual precipitation



Data are reproduced from Webb (1993).

for agricultural production, and for livestock production (Farmer and Wigley, 1985; Glantz, 1987). Tables IV. 1, and IV. 2, below, show the seasonal pattern of rainfall from 1983-1992 for Gerbi, and for Ablosh, as reported by respondents. Rainfall is ranked in terms of 'poor' and 'good' rains, ranging from 'no rain' to 'too much' rain. It would be unrealistic to expect respondents to recall the precise timing and pattern of seasonal rains over a long period, but these indicators, although imprecise, are still indicative of trends and they were the descriptive indicators used by respondents themselves.

A characteristic feature of rainfall at both survey sites was its high variability. As Table II. 1, for Gerbi, shows, the worst year in the study area over the

Table II. 1

Seasonal Pattern of Rainfall 1983-1992,
Gerbi Peasant Association

As Reported by Respondents

	Belg	Meher
1983	good	good
1984	no rain	no rain
1985	good	good
1986	good	good
1987	poor	v. poor
1988	good	good
1989	poor	poor
1990	poor	poor
1991	good	v. poor
1992	good	-

period 1983-1992 was clearly the famine year of 1984. According to informants, there was 'no rainfall' at all during the belg season of 1984. These failed belg rains were followed by some light rain that fell over a 2 day period at the end of May. These rains arrived too late for a belg crop, and were generally seen by informants as too sparse for the sowing of a meher crop, and as too light to relieve the effects of the prolonged

absence of rainfall on grazing pastures. After the cessation of these light May rains, the remainder of 1984 continued dry. No rain was received in the study area during the long Kerempt rainy season.

According to the official rainfall data for Wollo, rainfall in 1985, although improved, was still well below average, while 1986 is generally regarded as a good year, with well above average rainfall. (See Figure 1 above, see also Degefu, 1987.) While respondents also reported 'good' rainfall during 1986, rainfall during 1985 was also reported 'good'. Both the belg and the kerempt rains of 1985 began on time and were generally considered good by all informants. However, as the above data show, the kerempt rains of 1987, a slightly below average rainfall year (see Figure 1), were very poor in the study area. These rains began on time and then ceased in early September some 3 weeks before they were due to be over. These poor kerempt rains were preceded by 'poor' rains during the belg season.

As the above data also show, over the period 1987-1991, rainfall in the study area was characterized by successive years of poor rainfall. Although rainfall in the study area during 1988 was described as 'good', during 1989 and 1990 rainfall was poor for 4 consecutive seasons. 'Good' rainfall during the belg season of 1991 was again followed by 'very poor' kerempt rains. These rains ceased in early September, almost a month before they were due to be over. At the time of the survey, the 1992 belg rains were in progress. These rains began early, and respondents were optimistic that these rains would continue.

In the lowlands of Ablosh, the seasonal pattern of rainfall from 1983 to 1992 was broadly the same as that described for Gerbi. However, a different picture emerges when we look at rainfall in the highlands of Ablosh. As

in Gerbi, the worst year in the study area over the period 1983-1992 was the famine year of 1984. Except for some light rainfall in the lowlands over a 2 day period in late May, no rain was received in either the highlands or the lowlands of Ablosh during the belg and kerempt seasons of 1984. However, while rainfall in the lowlands during the belg seasons of 1987, 1989, and 1990, was described as 'poor', rainfall in the highlands during these seasons was generally described as 'good'. On the other hand, rainfall during the kerempt seasons of 1985, 1986, and 1988, was described as 'good' in the lowlands and as 'too heavy' in the highlands. According to informants, these heavy downpours in the highlands resulted in crop damage from excess water. As in Gerbi, the kerempt rains of 1990, both in the lowlands and in the highlands, were poor. Although the belg rains of 1991 were good, these rains were again followed by 'very poor' kerempt rains. These findings are shown in Table II.2, below.

Table II.2

Seasonal Pattern of Rainfall 1983-1992,
Ablosh Peasant Association

As Reported by Respondents

	Belg		Meher	
	Highland	Lowland	Highland	Lowland
1983	good	good	good	good
1984	no rain	no rain	no rain	no rain
1985	good	good	too heavy	good
1986	good	good	too heavy	good
1987	good	poor	v. poor	v. poor
1988	good	good	too heavy	good
1989	good	poor	poor	poor
1990	good	poor	poor	poor
1991	good	good	v. poor	v. poor
1992	good	good	-	-

Vegetation

In the highlands of Ablosh can be found a range of cacti species, Pines, and Eucalyptus trees. In the lowlands of Ablosh, as in Gerbi, can be found Accacia shrubs, thornbush, Eucalyptus, and Shola trees. According to respondents, the thick black volcanic soils in the highlands are easier to work than the loam-clay soils found in the lowlands. Fuelwood shortages was not reported as a problem in either of the study areas and, according to informants, animal dung was not used as a source of fuel.

II.6 THE 1975 LAND REFORM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

One factor crucial to understand the overall entitlements of these different communities and their different households is the pattern of land holding. This was in fact modified following the land reform of March, 1975, which was the first state enactment undertaken by the revolutionary government which had significant repercussions throughout the country. The impact of the land reform was far from uniform within one region, let alone throughout the country, and the literature suggests that the most fundamental changes were manifested in the south. The main components of the land reform, and the main characteristics of Ethiopia's traditional tenures which the land reform sought to replace, were described in Chapter II and are only briefly restated here.

Analysts of Ethiopia's traditional tenures frequently differentiate between the 'feudal' land relations introduced by the imperial state in the southern regions of the country around the turn of the century, and the 'rist', kinship, tenures based on ambilineal inheritance which pertained in the north-eastern highlands. The linkage between these traditional land tenures and peasant food insecurity as perceived by proponents of the

land reform was that, in the former 'feudal' land relations in the south of the country, peasants were straffed by onerous landlord exactions and, in some areas, such as Arsi, by the erosion of land rights as a result of the penetration of capitalism and the privatisation of land. In the latter kinship, or 'rist', system associated with the northern regions of the country, the problem was seen as peasants were forced on to tiny fragmented holdings partly as a result of increasing population pressure and the constant subdivision of land to meet the demands of claimants, and partly as a result of the commodification of land and the gradual erosion of traditional land rights. A related argument was that the lack of secure tenure rights faced by peasants both in the north, and in the south, of the country inhibited peasant investment in production and undermined peasant incentives to conserve environmental resources. (e.g. Cohen & Weaner, 1975; Cohen and Koehn, 1977, Hoben, 1973, Cliffe, 1974; Gilkes, 1975; Pankhurst, 1966; Stahl, 1974; Brietzke, 1975; Huffnagel, 1961; IBRD, 1973; USAID, 1973; Dunning, 1970.)

With the implementation of the land reform of March 1975, all rural lands were nationalised and peasants were given usufruct rights. In theory, landholdings were restricted to a maximum of 10 hectares. The sale, mortgage, and leasing of land, and the hiring of labour was prohibited; and all existing landlord-tenant relations, land rents, dues, and obligations were abolished.

To consolidate the reforms, new mass organisations - peasants', women's, and youth, associations - were established throughout the rural sector. The peasant associations, the lowest unit of local administration, provided an on-going link between the state and the rural population. Initially charged with the responsibility for land redistribution and the establishment of local

services, such as local defence squads, and local law courts, the functions of the peasant associations expanded to include the implementation of the government's economic and political policies. These included: the promotion of service cooperatives; the enforcement of state imposed taxes and grain quotas; the provision of military conscripts; and the implementation of government conservation, villagisation, and resettlement programmes.

Theoretically, the land reforms of the mid-1970s provided for better land access and to full entitlements for the poor, and for the redistribution of rural incomes. In the wake of the famine of the mid-1980s, however, the land reforms came under increasing attack from academics and international aid agencies alike. One of the main failings of the land reform as perceived by critics, is that the land reform failed to provide secure tenure rights and thereby failed to remove the disincentive effectives that were deemed to be the major production constraints of the traditional land tenures.

Rahmato (1988, & 1991), for instance, has argued that land redistribution brought about an equalisation of rural communities and removed the main basis for social differentiation in the countryside; however, increasing population pressure, and the need to constantly redistribute land to newly emerging households, has meant that peasants can have their land taken away from them from one season to the next. Other commentators have pointed to the control of land resources assumed by the state and to the appropriation of land for state ventures, such as, state farms. A second, and related, concern of critics was the erosion of the initial income gains of the land reform by government imposed levies, and by the imposition of compulsory grain quotas at low producer prices. (e.g. Cohen and Isaksson, 1988; Stahl, 1990, Lycett, 1991; Weiner, 1989; Wood, 1991.)

Assessing Land Relations in the Study Areas

In examining the effects of the Dergue's 1975 land reform on land relations at the local level, the three major research objectives were 1) to identify the nature of land relations in the study areas prior to the 1975 land reform, and to gather evidence as to whether access rights improved or worsened as a result of the land reform; 2) to assess the extent to which the land reform had/had not resulted in improved security of tenure; and, 3) to identify the extent to which the land reform had brought about an equalising effect on rural households; and, generally, thereby, to enter the above debates.

Within the general discussions on Ethiopia's traditional land tenures, the traditional land relations in Wollo have been likened both to the 'fuedal' tenures in the south of the country, and to the northern 'rist' tenures. (e.g. Cliffe, 1974; Fitzgerald, 1980; Lulseged Asfaw, 1974; Mesfin, 1984, and 1985). Yet, there exist few micro studies of land relations in Wollo before, or after, the 1975 land reform.

Several studies have focused on changing land rights among the Afar, and other pastoral communities, inhabiting the eastern lowlands of Wollo as a result of the development of large-scale commercial enterprises in the Awash Valley during the second half of the 1960s and early 1970s (e.g. Bondestam, 1974; Cossins, 1972, 1973; Flood, 1974; Harbeson, 1975, 1978; Kloos, 1982). Studies of land relations in the agricultural regions of Wollo before, and/or after, the land reform, are few. An exception is McCann (1986, 1987a, 1987b)'s study of land relations in the agricultural highlands of the Lasta region of north-western Wollo. The following discussion on land relations in the study areas prior to the 1975 land reform is based on information provided by survey informants.

II.6.1 LAND RELATIONS IN THE STUDY AREAS

Land Relations Prior to the 1975 Land Reform

In both Gerbi, and Ablosh, land relations, prior to the land reform, differed both from the traditional 'rist' tenure system based on ambilineal inheritance commonly associated with northeastern Ethiopia, and from the 'feudal' landlord-tenant relations associated with the southern tenures. (See Chapter I.) According to survey informants, before the land reform, access to arable landholdings was primarily through male kinship. Men traditionally acquired entitlement to land at the time of their first marriage. Marriage was virilocal and, on marriage, young married couples invariably established their own separate homesteads. Polygamous marriage was reported as common in both study areas.

On marriage men could inherit land from either their father or from other male relatives. In addition to these marriage endowments, men could also inherit land on the death of a male relative who may or may not have resided within the same community. Where the inherited land was located in a distant community, this land was generally leased to a local resident on a share crop basis. We found no evidence to suggest the beginnings of the commodification of land at the survey sites at that time. Respondents all reported that land was never sold.

According to informants, only widowed women had access to land in their own right before the land reform. A widowed woman acquired the right to cultivate the garden surrounding her homestead on the death of her husband. However, any additional landholdings belonging to the deceased husband were distributed either among the man's sons or among other male relatives where the man had no sons. In those cases where the deceased man's sons were

still children the land was held by a male relative on a custodial basis until the sons acquired entitlement to land. At both survey sites, respondents reported that married women only worked their husband's land, and that women had no right to a share of their husband's land in the event of divorce.

The Impact of the 1975 Land Reform on Land Relations in the Study Areas

In Wollo, as elsewhere in Ethiopia, the 1975 land reform was introduced in two stages. During the first stage, land was taken from the 'landlords' and redistributed to the 'tillers'. 'Meret larashu', or 'Land to the tiller', was the slogan used by student activists prior to the revolution, and this initial stage of the land reform was largely carried out by these student activists. Under the 1975 '<u>zemecha</u>' campaign, sponsored by the 'Derg' thousands of students were sent out across the country to assist the implementation of the reforms. In the second stage, peasant associations were formed, and the leaders of the peasant associations were responsible for distributing land.

At both survey sites, as throughout most of the country, the executive committees' of the peasant associations' were exclusively male. Each association had a chairman, a deputy chairman, and a secretary. Below them were 9 other members of the executive committee as well as a local militia and a local law court. According to informants, the committee leaders were initially chosen from among the most literate and, thus, in all likelihood, from among the wealthier members of the community.

There were few re-elections; in Ablosh, respondents reported one re-election in 1979; and, in Gerbi,

respondents reported 2 re-elections, one in 1979, and one in 1982. In all 3 re-elections most of the existing committee members were re-elected and the newly elected members invariably had relatives on the committee.

During the initial period of the land reform the impact of the land reform in the study areas was minimal in terms of land redistribution. In Gerbi, respondents reported that no land was redistributed at that time. In Ablosh, respondents reported that the only land reallocated in the study area during the zemecha period was a tract of land in the lowlands belonging to a local 'lord'. This land was land that belonged to the local 'gult' lord, or tax collector, who was also a member of the local community. The actual amount of land reallocated was not known, but estimates given by respondents ranged from between 40 to 60 hectares. According to informants, this confiscated land was redistributed among households that had only 'small' landholdings. The land was also allocated more or less equitably in terms of the quantity received by a household of a particular size.

To the question 'Has access to land improved since the land Reform?' the general consensus in the study areas was that access to land had not improved. In Ablosh, respondents reported that there was no offficial land redistribution in the peasant association after the initial land redistribution during the early stage of the land reform. A virtual freeze on land reallocation since the land reform was also reported by respondents in Gerbi. The opinion expressed by almost all informants in the study areas was that the peasant association leaders became increasingly nepotistic. A complaint voiced by all respondents was that the leaders of the associations kept land for themselves and for their kin.

However, the main complaint expressed by informants was that the leaders of the associations' used their control over land to extract 'disguised rents'. The forced payment of 'bribes' to the association leaders both to gain access to land and to prevent the confiscation of landholdings was reported as common at both survey sites. These 'disguised rents' included: cash payments, the provision of labour, and payments in the form of livestock.

However, at the disaggregate level, the effects of, and attitudes towards, the land reform in the study areas were mixed. While the land reform impacted directly on men in general, young male heads of households, in particular, saw themselves as the main casualties.

Among the older male respondents, some of these respondents saw themselves as the main losers during the early stage of the land reform. These were men that lost some of their landholdings at that time because these landholdings were located in settlements that fell outside of the peasant association boundaries.

Young male heads of households saw themselves as the main victims of the peasant associations' leaders' abuse of power. Those young male respondents that 'bribed' the leaders to gain access to land when they started a household bitterly resented having to pay for access to land; while other young male respondents that lacked sufficient resources with which to 'bribe' the leaders bitterly resented their effective exclusion from access to land, and who could blame them!

Among the male respondents sampled in Gerbi, 9 (33%) of the older male heads of households reported having lost land during the initial stage of the land reform; 11 (69%) of the young male heads of households were forced to 'bribe' the leaders to gain access to land; and, 5

(31%) of the young male heads of households reported being excluded from access to land because of lack of sufficient resources with which to 'bribe' the leaders.

The corresponding figures for Ablosh were: 5 (42%) of the older male heads of households lost land during the initial phase of the land reform; and 9 (100%) of the young male heads of households reported being forced to 'bribe' the leaders to gain access to land.

The 'disguised rents' extracted by the leaders from these young male heads of households varied in form. In Gerbi, 7 young male respondents paid in cash, ranging from 150 to 200 ETB; and 4 young male respondents reported working for one year on farms belonging to committee members. In Ablosh, one young male respondent paid 4 sheep; 3 respondents paid cash, ranging from 100 to 200 ETB; and 5 respondents worked on farms belonging to committee members. The length of these labour services ranged from one year to eighteen months.

Tables II.3 and II.4, below, show, respectively, the distribution of land and household size among sample households headed by male respondents in Gerbi, and in Ablosh, at the time of the survey. The data are based on a sample of 43 male-headed households in Gerbi, and 19 male-headed households in Ablosh. The household refers to the household head and his immediate dependents.

Landholdings are given in timad, the local land measure, which is roughly equal to a quarter of a hectare.

As these data show, mean landholding in the study areas increased with the size of households, although the rate of increase was not great. However, the data also show that the distribution range of landholdings within each household size grouping varied significantly.

Table II.3

Household Size and the Distribution of Land Among Sampled Households Headed by Male Respondents in Gerbi, at the Time of the Survey.

Hh. Size	Average landholding (in timad) Per person	Per hh.	Distribution range per hh.
4	0.8	3.5	2 - 4
5	0.6	3.2	0 - 8
6	0.9	5	0 -14
7	1	7.4	4 -12
8	0.9	7.3	6 - 8
9	0.6	-	-

Table II.4

Household Size and the Distribution of Land Among Sampled Households Headed by Male Respondents in Ablosh, at the Time of the Survey.

Hh. Size	Average landholding (in timad) Per person	Per hh.	Distribution range per hh.
4	2	-	-
5	0.6	3.3	2 - 8
6	1.3	8	4 -14
7	1	8	4 -12
8	1	-	-
9	0.8	-	-
10	0.8	-	-

In both study areas, variations in the size of landholdings were in some cases compounded by variations in the quality of land. This was a complaint voiced, in particular, by informants in Gerbi. Respondents reported that the peasant association leaders kept the better fields for themselves and for their kin, while the wealthier members of the community were able to ensure that they obtained better fields through payments to the committee leaders. Four male informants in Gerbi also reported that they had to 'bribe' the committee leaders in order to prevent the confiscation of some of the their better quality fields. These complaints were also voiced, although less frequently, by male informants in Ablosh.

This abuse of status and power by the associations' leaders' in the study areas generated a deep sense of insecurity and mistrust among community members. The following is a comment made by a male informant in Gerbi, but similar sentiments were expressed by informants in Ablosh.

> "The people stopped trusting each other. They (the association leaders) come and take your land and give it to another farmer. This farmer is your neighbour, but he is a 'rich' farmer, what can the poor farmer do? There is no trust among people any more."

Through their control over the local militia, the peasant association leaders had at hand the necessary coercive power to ensure their will, which they did not hesitate to use. To mention just two examples, one from each of the study areas: Ebrahim, an informant in Ablosh, told of how he was shot in the leg during the meher harvesting season of 1988 after refusing to work the fields belonging to the committee chairman because he

was too busy bringing in his own harvest. Hussein, an informant in Gerbi, told of how his young son was tragically shot dead in 1987 after refusing to work the fields belonging to one of the committee members.

Gender and Land

While men's relationships to land in the study areas were directly affected as a result of the land reform, women's relationships to land in the study areas were not affected. The only women respondents in the study areas that had land in their own right were 2 widows living in Ablosh. These 2 women each had a young daughter living with them. As was the case before the land reform, these women acquired the right to cultivate the gardens surrounding their homesteads on the death of their husbands. Whereas in the past the deceased husband's additional landholdings were distributed among his male relatives, these landholdings were confiscated by the peasant association leaders.

In both study areas, only the head of the household was registered with the peasant association, thus, most of the women respondents were not even registered members of the associations. Although all of the women respondents reported being members of the women's association, the general consensus of women informants was that the women's association was never taken seriously by the peasant association leaders. In Ablosh, one of the two women informants that reported asking the peasant association for land was herself an ex-head of the women's association. In both of these cases the women asked for the right to a share of their husband's land. And, in both cases, the women were told by the commmittee that they should be helping their husband to work his lands and not wasting the committees' time!

Demands for land by women in Gerbi were met with a similar response. In Gerbi, 4 of the married women respondents reported asking the peasant association for the right to a share of their husband's land. As in Ablosh, these women were told that their place was to help their husband work his land. A further 3 women respondents that reported asking for land were all divorcees. These 3 women all headed their own household and all 3 women had young children, ranging from 1 to 3 children per woman. In all of these cases these women were refused land by the peasant association committee on the grounds that they 'had no one to work the land'.

Given the nature of gender property rights on divorce in the study areas, divorce, for women, could mean immediate impoverishment. According to informants, on divorce, a woman only had the right to retain property that she brought to the marriage. All assets accumulated during the marriage, including the house and any personal items bought by the husband for the wife, such as jewelry and clothing, belonged to the husband. The right to children on divorce was also vested in men, although, in practice, very young children were invariably left with the woman. Men's control over these resources, was in addition to their right to retain land due the fact that, as we have seen, the right to land was vested in the male head of household.

The frequency of divorce, and, thus, remarriage, in the study areas was high. Out of a sample of 58 women respondents in Gerbi, and 28 women respondents in Ablosh, the number of divorces among these women respondents for each of the study areas was on average 3, ranging from 0 to 7 divorces per woman. The frequency of divorce as reported by these women respondents is shown in Table II.5, below. In all of these reported cases of divorce, the divorce was instigated by the husband. To ascertain information on the reasons for the frequency of divorce

in the study areas, both male and female respondents were asked to indicate the grounds for divorce for men and for women. The grounds for divorce for men as reported by

Table II.5

Frequency of Divorce among women respondents in Gerbi, and in Ablosh.

Gerbi								
	No.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Frequency	9	6	11	16	9	6	0	2
Ablosh									
	No.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Frequency	5	4	5	7	2	2	1	1

respondents were: 'barrenness', 'sickness', infidelity, and 'old age'. What these findings clearly indicate is that, in both study areas, women were valued both for their productive, and their reproductive, labour. In contrast, a woman could only divorce her husband if she could 'prove' that her husband frequently beat her without good reason. Howa, an informant in Gerbi, explained the difference:

> "If I am late preparing my husband's meal because I have been wasting my time talking to other women, then my husband is right to beat me because this is my fault. If I have done nothing wrong and my husband comes home drunk and beats me, then he is wrong. But my husband can say he beat me for something I did yesterday, or the day before. That is the problem."

The responsibility for resolving marital disputes lay with the male elders. However, the high frequency of divorce in the study areas reflects the ease with which men were able to dispose of their wives. For a man to

divorce a woman only required the man to say 'I divorce you' 3 times in front of 3 male elders.

For women, these gender property rights meant that, on divorce, women were forced either to return to their parents home or, where this was not an option, to seek accomodation with, or from, other relatives. Out of the 11 women respondents heading their own household in Gerbi, all of these women were divorced and all of the women lived in houses that belonged to relatives. Similarly, of the 4 women respondents heading their own household in Ablosh, 2 of these women were divorced and both of the women lived in houses that belonged to relatives.

These divorced women accounted for two-thirds of the landless households in the sample in Gerbi, and accounted for the 2 landless households in the sample in Ablosh.

In Gerbi, out of a sample of 54 households, 16 (30%) of these households were landless at the time of the survey. Eleven of these households were headed by divorced women. (As we have already seen, 5 of the landless households in Gerbi were headed by young men.) These households contained on average 2 persons, ranging from 1 to 4 persons per household. Of the 2 households headed by divorced women in Ablosh, one of these households contained an elderly woman living alone, and one household contained a young woman and her 2 year old daughter.

Land Relations: Conclusions

To conclude this discussion on the effects of the land reform on land relations in the study areas, the findings presented here show several things. Firstly, the finding that some households in the study areas were landless and did not have access to the minimum resource

with which to engage in subsistence production has implications beyond the immediate case studies and highlights the very important fact that policies aimed at relieving food insecurity in the rural areas need to take heed of activities beyond agricultural production per se.

Second, and relatedly, a comparison can be made between the findings presented here and Rahmato (1988, 1991)'s thesis that the land reform equalised rural communities. According to Rahmato, the land reform, through land redistribution, removed the basis for social differentiation in the countryside. To the extent that variations in landholdings exist in the rural areas this is seen simply as a function of family size. This latter argument has its intellectual origins in Chayanov (1966)'s works on social differentiation among the Russian peasantry in the 1920s. As we have seen, in both study areas, the distribution of land was far from equal, nor was there any relation between land and family size in the study areas. And we shall see that differentiation tends to be amplified by the distribution of other productive assets.

Moreover, Rahmato, as did Chayanov, sees the household essentially as an autonomous and undifferentiated unit, and fails to examine the nature of social relations both within and beyond the household. Thus, the ways in which the relations between the members and the leaders of the peasant associations, and the relations between men and women, determined the actual distribution of land in the rural areas are ignored.

This neglect, in turn, leads Rahmato, among others, to assume that where shortage of land, or landlessness, is a problem in the rural areas, this is due simply to population expansion. This single explanation for land shortage in the rural areas of Wollo, and northeastern Ethiopia generally, has prompted certain policy

solutions, including the Mengistu regime's highly controversial resettlement programme of the mid-1980s. Although resettlement is no longer state policy, within the current debates on the land issue the proposed solutions revolve around land privatisation and/or secure title to land. While we are not in a position to comment on the land-population ratio in either of the study areas, the evidence presented here, nevertheless, indicates that policies emphasising land privatisation, or secure title to land, will only confirm the unequal distribution of land.

Beyond the issue of land allocation the leaders of the associations' played a crucial role as intermediaries both between the state and the rural population, and between aid agencies and the rural population. These administrative powers over issues such as conscription, resettlement, and the distribution of food aid, were also used by the associations' leaders' to extract resources from community members. In both study areas, the payment of 'bribes' to the leadership to avoid conscription and/or resettlement, and to gain access to food aid was reported as common. This latter issue, and its significance during the famine of the mid-1980s, is discussed further in Chapter V

II.6.2 STATE EXACTIONS

According to informants, before the land reform, the annual tax paid by peasants in the study areas was one-fifth of the annual harvest, or, as one peasant informant in Ablosh put it:

> "In those days (i.e. before the land reform), the farmer gave one hand to the 'lord' ('gult' lord, or tax collector) and kept four hands for himself."

With the land reform, the peasants in the study areas clearly benefited from the abolition of these taxes and their consequent increased control over produce and/or income. These gains were soon eroded, however, with the imposition of state imposed land txes, agricultural taxes, grain quotas, and low producer prices from late 1978 early 1979 onwards. (See Chapter I) Land taxes, initially set quite low, rose from ETB10 to 20, to ETB30. (Lirenso, 1984). In Gerbi, informants reported having to pay ETB47 land tax from 1985 onwards. This was not the case in Ablosh, however, where the land tax was reported to be ETB30. It is possible that the increase was not an increased tax on land but an additional levey for the famine or the war effort. Nevertheless, and not surprisingly, these increased taxes were bitterly resented. All the more so coming at a time when people were still trying to recover from the terrible drought and famine of 1984.

Moreover, whereas before the land reform taxes were proportional, the newly imposed state taxes were fixed at a single level irrespective of size and quality of landholding and size of harvest. The implications of these fixed rents are twofold: the burden of taxation falls heaviest on those households with less land and small harvests; and, secondly, while households gain from fixed taxes in a good harvest year, in a poor harvest year households could be forced to sell what little grain they have just to meet these tax demands.

In both study areas, grain quotas ranged from 12kgs. to 1 qtl. (100kgs.) Quotas per household were allocated by the PA leaders and were based on the number of oxen owned. The quota for those households without oxen was 12kgs., and for those households with one ox, it was 25kgs. The quota for households owning a pair of oxen was 50kgs., and for those households owning more than two oxen it was 1qtl. Although, in both study areas,

respondents complained about the low quota prices and about the PA leaders rarely paying their quotas, unlike the ungraduated land tax, which was bitterly resented, it was generally felt that the quota allocations were fair.

II.7 AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

Type of Crops Grown in the Study Areas and their Relative Resistance to Drought.

The main crops grown in the study areas are shown in Table II.6 below. As the Table shows, in addition to the tree crop, coffee, a wider variety of cereal and pulse crops were grown in Ablosh. This variation between the study areas in the range of crops grown can be explained by the differences in altitude, soils and climate at the survey sites. Tobacco was the only non-food crop cultivated in the study areas.

Table II.6

Main Crops Grown in each of the Study Areas

	Cereals	Pulses	Tree Crops	Vegetables	Non-food crops
Ablosh	Maize Barley Sorghum Teff Wheat	Beans Chick peas Lentils	Coffee	Berberri Onions Garlic	Tobacco
Gerbi	Maize Sorghum Teff	Beans		Berberri Onions Garlic	Tobacco

Some crops were relatively more resistant to drought than others. Among the cereal and pulse crops grown in Ablosh, sorghum was ranked as the most reliable; a

short-maturing variety of maize called 'Katamani' was ranked as the second most reliable, followed by beans, and by peas.

Barley, wheat, teff, and all other maize varieties needed stable rains during the growing season. Teff was considered the most temperamental and the least reliable crop. Informants distinguished between two types of teff grown in the area, 'white' teff, and 'brown' teff. White teff was generally considered the superior of the two and was more suited to the climate and soils in the highlands; whereas brown teff could be grown in the lowlands. Barley and wheat could only be grown in the wetter highlands, or in certain years, while sorghum and 'Katamani' maize, because of their lower moisture requirements, could only be grown in the lowlands. All other maize varieties and some pulses, such as beans, were grown in both the high-lands and the lowlands. Tobacco was also grown both in the highlands and the lowlands, while coffee could only be grown in highlands. With the exception of teff, which only grown during the kerempt (long rains) season, all crops could be grown during both the belg (short rains) and the kerempt rains.

Among the cereal and pulse crops grown in Gerbi, sorghum was ranked the most reliable, followed by 'Katamani' maize, and by beans. Teff, and all other maize varieties, needed stable rains during the growing cycle. Only brown teff could be grown in the area and, as in Ablosh, teff was considered by respondents as the least reliable crop and was only grown during the kerempt season. Beans, and all other cereal crops, could be grown during either the belg or the kerempt seasons. Tobacco could also be grown during both cropping seasons.

Interestingly, 'Katamani' maize had only been grown in the study areas since the famine of the mid-1980s.

'Katamani' was a short-maturating crop and was relatively less vulnerable to drought than the maize varieties traditionally grown at the survey sites. Respondents in both study areas reported having obtained the seeds directly from migrant workers employed on Chaffa state farm located in the eastern lowlands of Kallu. The adoption of this new maize variety by respondents in the study areas was clearly a response to the drought and famine of the mid-1980s. However, as the following case study illustrates, the dissemination of these maize seeds in this way, i.e., without appropriate extension advice, was not without its dangers:

> Shikur, an informant in Ablosh, obtained the maize seeds around October 1985 from a 'migrant worker who worked on Chaffa farm'. Shikur was told that the maize would be ready to harvest in 3 months and that he would get '10 times' the yield of the traditional maize varieties. Shikur had some land in the highlands, and some land in the lowlands. During the belg cropping season of 1986, instead of planting barley and beans in the highlands, as he normally did, he planted all of his land in the highlands with the new maize. In the lowlands, for the meher harvest, he planted the traditional long-maturing maize. What Shikur had not known was that the new maize had a lower moisture level requirement and was unsuited to the wetter highland areas. In the event, he was faced with total crop failure. While the crop grew 'very tall' there were 'no heads of corn to harvest'. Without any harvest to see him and his family through to the meher harvest, Shikur was forced to choose between selling one of his two oxen, or his 40 coffee trees, both of which represented his future means of subsistence. Because an ox would be 'too expensive' to replace, he finally decided to sell his 40 coffee trees!

Shikur's experience was the most extreme example of the dangers of the dissemination of new seed strains without appropriate extension advice, but it was not an isolated case. Several other informants also related similar experiences of crop failure with the new seeds.

Yet, these findings on the adoption of this new seed strain in the study areas, so shortly after the devastating crop failures of the mid-1980s, clearly contradict the popular image of African peasantries as trapped in a cycle of poverty of their own making because of their unwillingness to adopt new technologies and take initiatives, and highlight, in the Ethiopian context, at least, the state's long term neglect of the drought prone regions in governmental out-reach projects.[17]

The Relative Importance of Crops Grown in the Study Areas

In both study areas peasants relied both on the belg and on the meher cropping season. In 1991, the meher harvest accounted for 56% of the annual harvest among sample households in Gerbi, and accounted for 69% of the annual harvest among sampled households in Ablosh.

These figures suggest that the belg harvest was of far less importance in Ablosh than in Gerbi. However, in both study areas, all of the peasant households sampled grew both a belg and a meher crop in 1991. In Ablosh, 14 (67%) of the 21 peasant households reported eating part of their belg, and part of their meher, crops 'at the early maturing stage' because of the need to bridge the food gap between harvests. A similar picture emerges when we look at Gerbi. Of the 38 peasant households sampled in Gerbi, 21 (55%) of these households also reported eating part of their belg, and part of their meher, crops at the 'early maturing stage' to bridge the food gap between harvests.

Two implications follow from these findings, firstly, weighting the relative importance of seasonal harvests simply in terms of output is clearly misleading and obscures the crucial importance of the belg harvest in terms of seasonal food security for individual households. The second, and related, implication is that the failure of either one of the two harvests would equally threaten the food security of individual households.

Table II.7

Type of Crops grown and Area sown in Timad during 1991, for Sampled Households in Gerbi Peasant Association

	No. of[1] hhs.	Area sown	Average area sown per hh.	% of total cultivated area
Maize	38	95	2.5	51
Sorghum	38	46	1	25
Teff	17	21	1	11
Beans	22	17.5	0.8	9
Tobacco	13	9	0.6	5

Total area cultivated in 1991: 186.5 timad (86%)

[1] Based on a sample of 38 households

Table II.8

Type of Crops grown and Area sown in Timad during 1991, for Sampled Households in Ablosh Peasant Association

	No. of[1] hhs.	Area sown	Average area sown per hh.	% of total cultivated area
Maize	19	58	3	45
Barley	19	29	1.5	22
Sorghum	19	20	1	15
Teff	5	9.5	2	7
Wheat	3	3	1	2
Beans	16	7.5	0.4	6
Tobacco	5	2.5	0.5	2

Total area cultivated in 1991: 129.5 timad (86%)

[1] Based on a sample of 21 households

Tables II.7, and II.8, above, show, respectively, the main type of crops grown by sample households in Gerbi, and in Ablosh, in 1991, the number of households growing each crop, and the area sown to crops. (Areas are given in 'timad', the local land measure, which is roughly equal to a quarter of a hectare.)

To ascertain the areas sown to different crops, rather than ask respondents to give precise land measures, which would have been very difficult, if not impossible, informants were asked to indicate the percentage of their land sown to a particular crop. The data do not include garden crops, such as vegetables, which are discussed separately, below. The calculations are based on a sample of 38 cultivating households in Gerbi, and 21 cultivating households in Ablosh.

As these data show, maize was the most important crop at both survey sites, followed by sorghum, teff, and tobacco in Gerbi, and followed by barley, sorghum, teff, beans, wheat, and tobacco in Ablosh.

Out of the sample households, 38 (100%) households in Gerbi, and 19 (90%) households in Ablosh, grew maize in 1991. Maize accounted for 51% of the cultivated area in Gerbi, and for 45% of the cultivated area in Ablosh. This preference for maize in the study areas can be explained in several ways; firstly, maize was the most important food crop. At both survey sites, maize was the main ingredient used in the preparation of 'injera' (a savoury pancake), 'dabbo' (bread), and in the preparation of 'niffro' (a type of porridge).

Secondly, respondents grew mainly a short-maturating, relatively reliable, and relatively high yielding type of maize. As we described above, although traditional maize varieties were still cropped in the study areas, most of the maize crop grown since the mid-1980s was of

the 'Katamani' variety. According to informants, of the cereal crops grown in the study areas, 'katamani' maize gave a higher yield per area sown.

Thirdly, maize was one of the least labour intensive crops and could be grown during both cropping seasons. In preparation for planting, for instance, maize required from 1 to 2 ploughings, whereas barley and wheat required from 2 to 3 ploughings, and teff, generally considered the most labour intensive crop, required from 4 to 5 ploughings. For a belg crop, maize, under favourable rains, was usually sown in February and could be sown up to the end of the first week in March. The 'Katamani' maize was harvested around the middle of May, while other maize varieties were harvested around mid- to end-June. For a meher crop, traditional maize varieties were sown, under favourable rains, during April and harvested around early October; while 'Katamani' maize was sown from mid- to end-July and harvested around end-October-early November.

Finally, in Kallu, as throughout Wollo, maize commanded the lowest price in the market and was, thus, the more affordable crop for households that did not meet, or that could only meet part of, their subsistence requirements directly. Thirty-three of the sample households in Gerbi, and 14 of the sample households in Ablosh, purchased grain in 1991. In all of these cases, these households reported purchasing maize, as opposed to other cereals, because maize was the 'cheapest'. According to informants, the grain sold in local markets in 1991 had come from the surplus producing areas of south-western Wollo which had received relatively better rainfall.

Sorghum was ranked as the second most important food crop in Gerbi, and the third most important food crop, after barley, in Ablosh. Sorghum was used in combination with maize to make the above mentioned dishes and was used

instead of maize when no maize was available. In Ablosh, barley was also used in the preparation of these dishes. In addition, barley was also roasted and served as a snack ('qollo') and was used in combination with wheat to make 't'ella', the local beer.

For a belg crop, sorghum could be sown, under favourable rains, from mid-February and up to the end of the third week in March for harvesting in June. The meher crop could be sown in April or May for harvesting in November. As the above Table shows, all of the sample households grew sorghum in combination with the short-maturating maize in 1991.

This crop-mix strategy enabled households to phase their planting and thereby minimize the risk of total seed loss and/or crop failure because of delayed on-set of rainfall and/or mid-season droughts, and to reduce labour conflicts. However, 21 of the 38 households in Gerbi that grew sorghum in 1991, and 13 of the 19 households in Ablosh that grew sorghum in 1991, all reported sowing less sorghum since the availability of the short-maturating, and relatively reliable, 'Katamani' maize because of the need to reduce the food gap between harvests.

In Ablosh, barley was grown by 19 (90%) of the sample households and accounted for 22% of the area sown in 1991. Barley, as we have already seen, required stable rains during the growing cycle and was grown in the wetter highlands of Ablosh. Under favourable rains, barley was sown in February, and harvested in June for a belg crop, and was sown from mid- to end-July and harvested in November for a meher crop. Barley was ranked by informants as the most important belg crop and, among the sample households, accounted for 67% of the 1991 belg harvest. This preference for growing barley, as opposed to the more reliable sorghum or maize, during the

belg season was because the latter crops could only be grown in the lowlands and the belg rains were considered by informants to be more reliable in the highlands than in the lowlands. However, informants also reported a preference for growing lowland crops, as opposed to highland crops, during the kerempt (long rains) season because rainfall during the kerempt season was often 'too heavy' in the highlands which increased the risk of crop damage from excess water and/or flooding. Extremes in temperature in the highlands also increased the risk of crop damage from frost.

Teff accounted, in 1991, for an estimated 11% of the area sown by sample households in Gerbi, and for an estimated 7% of the area sown by sample households in Ablosh, and was grown by 17 (45%) of the sample households in Gerbi, and by 5 (24%) of the sample households in Ablosh. At both survey sites, teff was considered a luxury, and had the highest value in the market. However, as we have seen, teff was also the least reliable, and the most labour intensive, of the cereal crops.

Teff was reserved mainly for use in the preparation of 'injera' for ceremonial occasions, and was grown by respondents mainly as a cash crop. Of the 17 sample households in Gerbi, and the 5 sample households in Ablosh, that grew teff in 1991, all of these households reported that they intended to sell most of their teff harvest. The main reason given by respondents for not growing teff in 1991 was because of the need to grow a more reliable crop. This was followed, in Ablosh, by shortage of oxen and shortage of labour, 9 households (43%), and by shortage of labour, 8 households (38%); and was followed in Gerbi by shortage of oxen, 14 households (37%), and shortage of oxen and shortage of labour, 7 households (18%).

Interestingly, wheat, the main form of food aid in the study areas, was generally disliked by informants as a consumption crop because of its taste. In Ablosh, wheat was mainly used in the preparation of 't'ella', and like teff, was grown by respondents primarily as cash crop. Wheat required stable rains during the growing cycle and, under favourable rains, was normally sown in February, and harvested in June, for a belg crop, and was sown from mid- to end-July, and harvested in November, for a meher crop. Wheat was grown by 3 of the sample households in Ablosh in 1991, and accounted for only 2% of the area sown.

Pulses, although needed in smaller quantities, were the main supplements to a cereal diet. At both survey sites, the most important pulse was beans. The beans were ground and then used as the basis for 'shiro', the sauce with which 'injera' was consumed. In Ablosh, lentils were used for the same purpose, although informants reported that they preferred to grow beans because beans were more reliable. Beans were also eaten fresh, roasted, or dried and then boiled or roasted.

Beans and, in Ablosh, other pulses, such as lentils, and peas, were sown, under favourable rains, in February, and harvested in May, for a belg crop, and were sown from mid-July to mid-August, and harvested in late October for a meher crop. In Ablosh, lentils were at times intercropped with barley or wheat because lentils were particularly susceptible to frost. Beans, nitrogen fixers, were normally rotated with either lentils or a cereal crop and were never sown on the same plot twice in succession. Beans accounted, in 1991, for 9% of the area sown by sample households in Gerbi, and for 6% of the area sown by sample households in Ablosh, and were grown by 22 (58%) of the sample households in Gerbi, and by 16 (76%) of the sample households in Ablosh. Sixteen (48%) of the sample households in Gerbi, and 5 (24%) of the

sample households in Ablosh, reported not growing beans in 1991 because of the need to grow the more vital cereal crops.

Thus, strategies to minimize the risks of crop failure commonly found in Africa, (e.g. Watts, 1983; Richards, 1985; Shipton, 1990) were known and practiced in the study areas, including staggered (or phased) planting of a range of cereals, intercropping, and crop rotation. Which of these strategies were used depended on rainfall, on the consumption needs of the household, and on the resources available to the household, including land, oxen, and labour.

Tobacco, the only non-food crop cultivated in the study areas, does not appear in the official production statistics for Wollo. Yet, for some households in the study areas, tobacco was a valuable cash crop. According to survey informants, a bundle of unprocessed tobacco sold in local lowland markets in January/February (i.e. post harvest) fetched around 40 ETB., however, the same bundle of tobacco sold in September fetched around 700 ETB.. The tobacco was bought by the 'big' merchants from Dessie for sale in the main towns, including, Addis Ababa and Asmara, and for export across the border to Djibouti.

Tobacco has a storage life of around 5 to 6 years' and was generally considered by informants as an important means of savings. The majority of respondents, however, reported that they were either unable to grow tobacco or that the amount that they were able to grow was too small to be of much value. Tobacco, in 1991, accounted for an estimated 2% of the area sown by sample households in Ablosh, and for an estimated 5% of the area sown by sample households in Gerbi. Five (24%) of the sample households in Ablosh, and 13 (34%) of the sample households in Gerbi, grew from 1 to 2 bundles of tobacco

per household. A further 2 households in Ablosh, and a further 4 households in Gerbi, reported growing small amounts of tobacco in their gardens. All of these informants reported that the amounts they were able to grow were too small to take to market and the tobacco grown by these households was sold to wealthier members of the community. However, the majority of the sample households, 14 (67%) households in Ablosh, and 21 (55%) households in Gerbi, all reported that they were unable to grow tobacco because of the need to reserve land, and labour, for growing the more vital cereal crops.

Cash crops grown at the expense of food are widely portrayed in the literature as a cause of food insecurity both at the household, and at the national level (e.g, George, 1976; Lappe and Collins, 1977; Dinham and Hines, 1983; Lofchie, 1988). However, as the findings presented here show, the general criticism laid against cash crops that they compete with food crops for land and labour did not fit the situation in either of the study areas.

In Ablosh, the main food crops were maize, barley, and sorghum. In 1991, these 3 crops were grown by 19 (90%) of the sample households, and accounted for an estimated 84% of the area sown. Similarly, the main food crops in Gerbi were maize and sorghum. These two crops were grown by all 38 (100%) of the sample households in 1991, and accounted for an estimated 76% of the area sown. These findings indicate that, at both survey sites, agricultural production was primarily oriented towards meeting subsistence requirements and that food security was the important consideration in determining land use priorities.

Table II.9, below, shows the production for cereals and pulses obtained by sample households in 1991, a 'poor' rainfall year, compared to what respondents would expect from production in a 'normal' rainfall year. The data

show the cumulative production for 21 sample households in Ablosh, and for 38 sample households in Gerbi, as well as the average production per household. Yields are given in quintals (100kgs.).

Table II.9

Production in 1991 'Poor' Rains, and Expected Production in 'Normal' Rainfall Year (in Quintals (100kgs.)

	Ablosh PA[1]		Gerbi PA[2]	
	1991 'Poor' Rains	Expected Production 'Normal' Rains	1991 'Poor' Rains'	Expected Production Normal' Rains
Maize	64	163	179	387
Barley	39	40	-	-
Sorghum	26.5	44	74	110.5
Teff	8	15	21.5	32.5
Wheat	5.5	-	-	-
Beans	16.5	18	12	20
Total	159.5	280	286.5	550
Hh. Avge.:	7.5	13	7.5	14

[1] Based on a sample of 21 cultivating households
[2] Based on a sample of 38 cultivating households

In Ablosh, the expected production in a 'normal' rainfall year for sample households was on average 13 qtls., ranging from 1 to 21 qtls per household. Nine of the households (43%) expected to grow less than the average. Of these, 2 households (10%), both of which were headed by women, did not expect to grow more than 2 qtls.; and 5 households (24%) did not expect to grow more than 10 qtls. Thus, even in a 'normal' year these households only grew a limited portion of their food needs and can in no accurate sense be thought of as 'subsistence producers'.

A similar picture emerges when we look at Gerbi. In Gerbi, the average expected production in a 'normal' year

was 14 qtls., ranging from 6 to 21 qtls. per household. Twenty-one of the households (55%) expected to grow less than the average. Of these, 4 households (11%) did not expect to grow more than 6 qtls., and 16 households (42%) did not expect to grow more than 10 qtls.

Consumption of Foods other than Cereals and Pulses

Other foods consumed in the study areas included: vegetables, coffee, milk, sugar, salt, and meat.

The main vegetables grown in the study areas were: onions, garlic, and 'berbere'. 'Berbere', a type of chilli pepper, was used as the basis for a hot, spicy sauce which, like 'shiro', was eaten as a complement to 'injera'. These cultivated vegetables were supplemented at times with forage plants, such as nettles, and a type of wild cabbage, collected by the women of the household.

In Ablosh, vegetables were grown mainly in gardens and were grown by the majority of sampled households. Those households that did not grow vegetables in Ablosh, were 2 households headed by women. One of these households contained an elderly divorced woman who lived alone, and the other household contained a young divorced woman in her mid-20s and her 9 months' old daughter. These two women were both landless, and neither of them had access to a garden. In Gerbi, 4 (10%) of the sampled households also reported that they were unable to grow vegetables because they had no gardens and no arable landholdings.

Coffee was the most important refreshment at both survey sites. In Gerbi, coffee had to be purchased. Although coffee was grown in Ablosh, only 5 (22%) of the sample households owned coffee trees. The number of coffee trees owned by these households ranged from 10 to 35

trees per household. The estimated annual yield per mature coffee tree, under favourable conditions, is 2 kilograms (Keith Tomlinson, ODA, personal communication). So the average household could be expected to produce 20-70kgs. which would realize ETB160-875.

At both survey sites, the seeds from a plant known locally as 'Asenameeka' which, although bitter, had a similar taste to coffee were at times mixed with coffee beans, or were used instead of coffee beans, by those households that could not afford to purchase coffee. In Gerbi, 20 (37%) of the sample households reported buying coffee regularly, 23 households (43%) bought coffee 'sometimes', and 11 households (20%) bought coffee only 'rarely'. All of these latter households reported drinking 'poor man's coffee', i.e. coffee made from 'Asenameeka' seeds. The corresponding figures for Ablosh were: 7 (33%) of the sample households bought coffee 'regularly', 9 households (43%) bought coffee 'sometimes' (3 of these households owned coffee trees), and 5 households (24%) bought coffee 'rarely'. As in Gerbi, these latter households all reported drinking coffee made from 'Asenameeka' seeds.

Milk was only consumed by those households that had access to milk yielding animals, such as milch cows, goats, sheep and, in Gerbi, camels. Milk was also processed into butter, sometimes for personal use, but mainly for sale in local lowland markets. The processing itself was always undertaken by the women of the household. According to survey informants, a pat of butter weighing around 200 grams, fetched between 7 to 8 ETB.

Milk itself was never sold because of the belief that the animal would die if the milk was boiled. Among the sample households, 13 households (62%) in Ablosh, and 31 households (57%) in Gerbi owned milk yielding animals;

all of these households reported that, although adult household members sometimes consumed milk, milk was mainly given to children. Five of these households in Ablosh, and 17 of these households in Gerbi, reported that they 'regularly' gave their children milk. Thus, milk was clearly an important supplement to the diet of the children of these households. Eight of these households in Ablosh, and 14 of these households in Gerbi, reported giving their children milk 'sometimes', depending on the level of milk production yields, and on the income needs of the household.

Meat was only eaten on ceremonial occasions and during times of stress such as drought. Animals were slaughtered for meat on festive occasions such as marriages (which took place during the month of January, after the meher harvest and before the commencement of the belg cropping season), and to celebrate religious festivities, such as the end of Ramadan, the 4 week period of Muslim religious fasting. Animals were only ever slaughtered by men, and the type of animal slaughtered depended on wealth. More commonly, small livestock, such as goats or sheep were killed, although cows were also slaughtered by wealthier members of the community. Small livestock, such as sheep and goats were also slaughtered during times of drought and food shortage, although, as we shall see in the following Chapter, animals were more commonly sold during the drought of the mid-1980s.

Salt, a basic good, and sugar, a luxury, could be bought from the service cooperative shop at almost half the market price. The distribution of these goods occurred on a quota basis whenever they were brought in, theoretically once a month, in practice much less regularly. When available, the ration was usually about 1.5 kilos of salt and 1 kilo of sugar per household. In 1991, sugar was not available, although all of the sample

households reported buying salt in 1991. In Ablosh, salt was purchased on the market and not from the service cooperative. As already mentioned, the villagers in Ablosh reported that they never used the service cooperative because it was too far away. Thus, these households were forced to pay the full market price.

Fragmented Landholdings

The cultivation of several fragmented and dispersed plots was common at both survey sites. Among the sample households in Gerbi, landholdings per household varied from around 0.5 to 3.5 hectares, with a mean at 1 hectare. These holdings were fragmented into between 2 and 14 plots, the average being 7 plots. The location of plots (other than gardens) in relation to homesteads ranged from less than half-an-hour to 2 hours' walking distance.

In Gerbi, the impact of villagisation in terms of distance from arable holdings was mixed. While 7 (18%) of the sample households reported having to walk further to reach plots since villagisation; 3 households (8%) reported a decrease in the distance from plots; and 28 households (74%) reported an increase in the distance from some plots, and a concomitant decrease in the distance from other plots since villagisation. Moreover, distance from plots was not generally considered as a problem by respondents. This was explained by the fact that the traditional pattern of landholdings was characterized by fragmentation into dispersed plots, and by the fact that, prior to villagisation, the villagers' traditional settlements, and peoples previous homesteads, were located roughly within up to a maximum of 3 hour's walking distance from the new village.

However, lack of access to pack animals to transport inputs to and from distant plots was considered a serious

constraint. At the time of the survey, 20 (53%) of sample households owned donkey/mules, ranging from 1 to 3 donkeys/mules per household; and 18 (47%) of the sample households had no pack animals. Of the 18 households without pack animals, 8 of these households hired donkeys/mules in 1991, and 10 of these households reported that they could not afford to hire pack animals in 1991. The rent for donkeys/mules varied seasonally and increased, with increased demand, during harvesting. According to informants, the rent for donkeys/mules rose from 3 ETB per day, out of season, to 10 ETB. per day during harvesting. For those households renting pack animals, these rents reduced the income available to these households. For those households that could not afford to hire pack animals, the difficulties of transporting inputs to and from distant plots, and the difficulties of bringing in the harvest, were increased.

In Ablosh, landholdings among sample households averaged 1.6 hectares, ranging from less than 1 timad (roughly a quarter of a hectare) to 3.5 hectares per household. The number of plots cultivated by these households averaged 8, ranging from 1 to 13 plots per household. With the exception of 2 women-headed households, all of the cultivating households sampled in Ablosh had landholdings located both in the highlands and in the lowlands. The 2 women heading their own households both cultivated gardens surrounding their homesteads in the highlands.

The cultivation of steep mountain slopes observed in the agricultural highlands of Lasta in northwestern Wollo, (McCann, 1986) and in the agricultural highlands of Ambasel in northeastern Wollo (Dessalegn Rahmato, 1988, and 1991) was not common in Ablosh, and none of the plots cultivated by sample households were on steeply sloping land. That steep slope cultivation was not a feature of the agricultural system in Ablosh indicates

two things. The first implication is that population pressure on land, commonly associated with steep slope cultivation in the highlands of northern Wollo, was not such a problem in the area. And we shall later that shortage of labour was reported as problem. The other implication is that, to the extent that population pressure on land is a problem in the agricultural highlands of Wollo, this problem is locally specific and not generalized throughout the highlands of Wollo.

Plots located in the highlands were generally close to the homestead, whereas the location of lowland plots in relation to homestead ranged from 2 to 3 hours' walking distance. Not surprisingly, pack animals were highly valued by respondents in Ablosh because of the difficulties of transporting inputs from the lowlands to the highlands. As in Gerbi, the distribution of pack animals in Ablosh was also highly skewed. Among the sample households, 12 households (57%) owned pack animals, ranging from 1 to 3 pack animals per household, and 9 households (43%) had no pack animals.

According to survey informants, the rent for pack animals out of season was from 3 to 4 ETB. per day. These rents increased to 12 ETB. per day during harvesting time. That these rents were higher in Ablosh than in Gerbi indicates the high value placed on pack animals in the area. Out of the 9 sample households that had no pack animals, 5 of these households rented pack animals in 1991, and 4 of these households reported that they could not afford to rent pack animals in 1991. For those households that neither owned, nor could afford to hire, pack animals, the transporting of inputs to and from lowland plots was a particularly arduous task that was made more difficult during the rainy season when the narrow mountain path became muddy and dangerously slippery.

In Ablosh, in addition to access to pack animals, the amount of labour available to the household was crucial in determining the extent to which households were able to minimize the work spent travelling between highland and lowland plots. During the agricultural cycle, members of households, typically the male head and the children of the household took turns in spending from 1 to 3 weeks' at a time in the lowlands. In this way, members of households alternated their time spent tending highland and lowland plots. During the month of January, i.e., before the on-set of the belg cropping season, small conicle shaped houses, made from crop stalks, were constructed in the lowlands specifically for this purpose. These houses were sited as close as possible to lowland plots. In addition to reducing the time spent travelling to, and from, these distant lowland plots, respondents also reported that residing in the lowlands in this way enabled them to guard crops against birds and other potential predators

For those households that either had no children, or where the children were at school or were too young to stay in the lowlands, the male heads of these households were forced to reduce the time spent tending individual plots. Children were generally considered responsible enough to stay in the lowlands at about 8 or 9 years of age. Among the sample households, 5 households (24%) reported that this distribution of labour between men and children was not possible in 1991 because the children of these households were too young to stay in the lowlands.

Although women provided labour for almost all agricultural tasks both in the highlands and in the lowlands (see below) it was unheard of for women to spend the night in the lowlands. However, in addition to their agricultural tasks, women were also responsible for the task of taking food and water to men working in

the fields. The women took food and water to men tending highland plots on a daily basis, while food and water for family members tending lowland plots was carried down to the lowlands on alternate days.

Those women that had children were, at times, assisted in these tasks by their children. However, the extent to which women were able to allocate these tasks to children depended on the age of the children and on whether or not the children themselves were staying in the lowlands. Children were generally considered old enough to transport food to the lowlands at around 5 or 6 years of age. The work time spent taking food to the lowlands by these women and children ranged from 4 to 6 hours per round trip. The time spent taking food and water to men working in fields in the highlands ranged from around half-an-hour to one hour per round trip.

The cultivation of fragmented and dispersed plots in the study areas did increase the labour demands placed on some households, but only to the extent that they go to more than one plot per day. However, as the findings presented here show, the main problems as perceived by respondents were lack of access to pack animals, and the limited amount of labour available to the household.

In response to the question 'would you prefer your lands to be less fragmented?', none of the respondents in Gerbi, and only one respondent in Ablosh, said they would prefer their lands to be less fragmented. By far the majority of respondents reported that they preferred their lands to be fragmented because of the benefits and reduced risk to be derived from micro-ecological variations in soils and climate. Fragmented land came about as a result of the traditional system of land relations based on inheritance and was preserved in the land reform. Fragmentation was preferred both to minimize the risk of total crop failure, and for crop

diversification, since some plots were more suited to certain crops. This suggests that policies promoting land consolidation are likely to be unsuccessful.

Agricultural Labour

At both survey sites, land was ploughed for the belg crop in December or January, before the on-set of the rains, and in June or July for a meher crop. The minimum requirement for ploughing was a pair of oxen. The use of other types of livestock for ploughing was not common in the study areas, although some informants reported pairing cows with oxen after the drought of the mid-1980s because of the shortage of oxen. The plough itself consisted of a long wooden shaft with a metal tip.

Ploughing was done by men and, in both study areas, it was unheard of for women to plough. According to survey informants, it took a man one day to plough a timad (roughly a quarter of a hectare) with a pair of oxen. In both study areas, the distribution of oxen was highly skewed. At the time of the survey, 3 (14%) of the sample households in Ablosh had no oxen; 6 households (32%) had only one ox; 8 households (42%) had a pair of oxen; and 5 households (5%) had from 3 to 4 oxen. The figures for Gerbi were: 8 households (21%) had no oxen; 13 households (34%) had one ox; 8 households (21%) had the necessary pair of oxen; and 9 households (24%) had from 3 to 4 oxen. Those households that were short of oxen were dependent on wealthier members of the community for their access to oxen. The implications of these oxen shortages for these households is discussed in Section IV.4.2, below.

To minimize the risk of seed loss because of rain failure, or delays in the on-set of the rains, planting was delayed until 2 or 3 days after the commencement of the first rains of the season. Women were responsible for

bagging seeds in preparation for sowing, although the actual sowing of the seeds was done by both men and women. According to survey informants, roughly half a quintal of seed grain was required per timad (i.e. about a quarter of a hectare). None of the respondents reported purchasing seed in 1991, although all informants reported having purchased some seed during times of seed shortage. Seeds were usually retained from crops harvested during the preceding season, or were bartered for with neighbouring growers.

As we have seen, staggered planting, intercropping, and rotation were practiced at both survey sites. While the benefits of fallowing were also widely known, leaving land idle was generally associated with rain failure, and the inability to undertake cultivation because of shortage of oxen and/or shortage of labour.

Up to the time of the survey, none of the respondents had ever used chemical fertilizers, and only 2 respondents in Gerbi had ever used pesticides. However, the use of natural fertilizer in the form of animal dung was assured because of the practice of grazing livestock on crop stubble after harvest. Shortage of wood was not considered as a problem by respondents in either of the study areas and animal dung was neither used as a source of fuel, nor was it ever sold and, thus, had no exchange value in the study areas.

At both survey sites, there was a general acceptance that animals were allowed to graze freely on private landholdings after harvest. An important outcome of this practice was that those households that had no livestock had access to fertilizer. Given that, in both study areas, those households without livestock were among the poorer members of the community, the implication of this finding is that policies promoting the exclusive use of chemical fertilizers would likely result in the erosion

of this practice and thereby exclude the poorer households, that could not afford the cost of inorganic fertilizers, from access to fertilizer

Weeding was generally considered as a particularly arduous task and involved men, women and children. Weeding of belg crops was done during the months of march and April. Weeding of long-maturating meher crops, such as sorghum, and the traditional maize varieties, was done during June, while all meher crops had to be weeded during the months of August and September. Weeds were an important source of feed for livestock and were reserved for use as fodder.

Harvesting and threshing were done by both men and women. Harvesting of belg crops was done during the months of May and June, while meher crops were harvested in October and November. However, during times of food shortage, the harvesting of part, if not all, of the belg crops at the early maturing stage (normally in April), as well as the harvesting of meher crops at the early maturing stage (i.e., in August), was common in both study areas.

As mentioned above, 14 (67%) of the cultivating households sampled in Ablosh, and 21 (52%) of the cultivating households sampled in Gerbi, reported harvesting and eating both belg and meher crops at the early maturing stage. In all of these cases these households reported that they regularly eat crops at the early maturing stage. These periods of food shortage, i.e., April and August, coincided with periods of high grain prices. In Kallu, as throughout Wollo, grain prices rose in April, prior to the belg harvest, and reached their peak during August and September, i.e., during the months immediately preceding the meher harvest. Thus, the eating of crops at the early maturing stage was clearly a local response to seasonal hunger and high grain prices.

Threshing of belg crops was normally done in May and June, and in November for meher crops. Threshing was mainly done by men, although women and children helped with such activities as driving the livestock over the grain. Once threshed the grain was put into a large granary, 'gudgnot', outside the owner's hut. These granaries were controlled by men and men were responsible for trans-ferring grain needed for subsistence from these stores to small granaries located inside the hut. These small granaries were controlled by the head woman of the house-hold, although these women were expected to use this grain for the preparation of food.

The cropping calendars for Gerbi, and for Ablosh, are shown, respectively, in Tables II.10 and I1.11, below. As can be seen from these Tables, these agricultural tasks overlapped and/or had to be carried out simultaneously. Labour demands peaked during the months of weeding and harvesting. These periods necessitated the involvement of all available labour. The weeding of meher crops fell within the main rainy season and was generally considered by informants as a particularly arduous task that, in Ablosh, was made more difficult during periods of heavy rainfall in the highlands because this encouraged the spread of weeds and increased the demands on labour. As we have seen, for many households, this was also a period of seasonal hunger and, thus, low energy levels.

It was also the period when people became increasingly susceptible to sickness from malaria. As we shall see, below, at both survey sites, malaria was seen by informants as a serious labour constraint.

Table II.10

Cropping Calendar for Gerbi Peasant Association

December-January	Ploughing
February	Sow: maize[1], sorghum, beans
March	Weeding
April	Weeding. Sow maize[2], sorghum
May	Harvest and thresh first maize crop
June	Harvest and thresh first sorghum crop
Mid-June-mid-July	Ploughing, weed second maize/sorghum crop
Mid-July-mid-August	Sow: teff, maize[1], beans
Mid-August-end September	Weeding
October-November	Harvest and thresh crops

[1] = short-maturing maize variety
[2] = long-maturing maize varieties

Table II.11

Cropping Calendar for Ablosh Peasant Association

	Highland	Lowland
Dec./Jan.	Ploughing	Ploughing
February	Sow: pulses, barley, wheat	
March	Weeding	
April	Weeding	Sow: maize[1]
May	Harvest pulses	Sow: Sorghum
June	Harvest & thresh barley, wheat	Weeding
Mid-June-mid-July	Ploughing	Ploughing
Mid-July-mid-Aug.	Sow: pulses, barley, wheat, teff	Sow: teff, maize[2], beans
Mid-Aug./end-Sept.	Weeding	Weeding
October-November	Harvest & thresh crops	Harvest & thresh crops

[1] = long-maturing maize varieties
[2] = short-maturing maize variety

Processing and cooking were done exclusively by women. Women were responsible for setting out the grain to dry, for the washing, pounding, and the grinding of grains and spices. Most of these tasks were done just outside the hut. On sunny days grains and spices were set out to dry on a sack just outside the doorstep. When dry, the grain was then pounded, sometimes by two women working together.

The grinding of grains and spices was mainly done with the use of a grinding stone and was a laborious task. In Ablosh, some of the women occasionally used the mill located in Morkoy, the small, lowland, town lying at the foot of the mountain and some 2 hours walking distance down the mountain face. However, most households relied on the labour of women. Only 3 (11%) of the women respondents reported having used the mill in 1991. Unlike Ablosh, Gerbi Peasant Association had its own mill, although the mill did not always function and often ran out of diesel. In addition, poorer households found the few cents required too expensive. Only 15 (26%) of the women respondents reported using the mill in 1991.

At both survey sites, agricultural tasks were carried out within the household, supplemented in some cases with non-household labour. Shortage of labour was ranked as the main reason for leaving land idle, in Ablosh, and was

ranked second in Gerbi, the first being shortage of oxen. Factors affecting the amount of household labour available for agricultural production included: the size and composition of households, the gender division of labour, and sickness.

The Size and composition of Households

Table II.12, below, shows the composition of households at the time of the survey among peasant households sampled in Ablosh. The household refers to the landowner and his or her immediate dependants. The data are based on a sample of 21 households. The household unit contained on average 6 persons, ranging from 2 to 10 people per house-hold. As these data show, household composition varied significantly. Marriage was virilocal and polygamous marriage was common to the area, although monogamous marriage was the predominant type of marriage among the sample households. By far the majority of households (67%) contained a husband, wife, and child(ren); 3 households contained 3 generations; 2 households contained a widowed woman and her child, and 2

Table II.12

Composition of Sample Households in 1991/1992, Ablosh Peasant Association (No. of Households)

Husband, wife, child(ren)	14	67%
Husband, wife, child(ren), grandmother	1	5%
Husband, wife, child(ren), div. daughter, grandchild	2	10%
Husband, 2 wives, children	2	10%
One woman and one child	2	10%

Sample size = 21 households

households were polygamous. In the polygamous households, the number of co-wives was two. In both of these cases, the co-wives were resident in the same settlement, but each wife and her children lived in a separate house with the husband sharing his time between the two

residences. The women prepared their own food and the senior wife had no control over the labour of the junior wife. In theory, the amount of time a husband spent with each wife was based on an agreement between the spouses. However, as one co-wife informant reported, there was little that a co-wife could do if the husband chose to spend more of his time with one wife. The amount of time the husband spent with each wife in the sample households ranged from 3 to 7 days at a time.

The composition of households among peasant households sampled in Gerbi is shown in Table II.13, below. The data are based on a sample of 38 households. Marriage was virilocal and, as in Ablosh, , and polygamous marriage was common to the area, although only one of the sample house-holds was polygamous. The household unit contained on

Table II.13

Composition of Sample Households in 1991/1992, Gerbi Peasant Association (No. of Households)

Husband, wife, child(ren)	**34**	**89%**
Husband, wife, child(ren), grandmother	**1**	**3%**
Husband, wife, child(ren), div. daughter, grandchild	**1**	**3%**
Husband, wife, child(ren), div. daughter, 2 grandchildren	**1**	**3%**
Husband, 2 wives, children	**1**	**3%**

Sample 38 households

average, 6 persons, ranging from 4 to 9 people per house-hold. Eighty-nine per cent of the households contained a husband, wife, and children, and 3 of the households contained 3 generations. The number of wives in the polygamous household was 2. As in Ablosh, the women lived in separate houses and each wife prepared her own food.

Thus, in both study areas, the average size of households was only small. The average number of adults per

household was two, ranging from 1 to 3 in Ablosh, and from 2 to 3 in Gerbi.

The small average size of households cannot be explained by the famine of the mid-1980s. Only 3 of the sample households in Gerbi, and one of the sample households in Ablosh, reported having members that died during the famine. In all of these cases it was the children of women-headed households that died (See Chapter III, below).

However, one explanation for the small size of families is the young age of marriage. In both study areas, according to informants, women marry for the first time between the age of 13 and 16, while men marry between the age 17 and 21. Another possible explanation could be a high incidence of infant mortalities in 'normal' times. Although we did not include the question of infant mortalities in our survey, during discussions with groups of women, the women reported that infant mortalities were frequent.

In addition to the size and composition of households, additional factors affecting the amount of labour available to the household included the gender division of labour, sickness, and more recently, in Gerbi, compulsory literacy classes for adults, especially women, and schooling for children.

Gender Division of Labour

In addition to the processing and cooking of food, women were responsible for the care of children, for fetching water, and for collecting fuelwood. Collecting fuelwood was an arduous task that took from 4 to 5 hours per round trip. For those women that had access to a pack animal this task was made easier. However, as we have already

seen, in both study areas the distribution of pack animals was highly skewed.

Moreover, among the sample households that owned pack animals, these animals were in all cases owned by the husband and the women of these households did not have automatic entitlement to use these animals. In both study areas, those women respondents married to men that owned pack animals reported that they rarely had access to these animals.

Table II.14

Women's Allocation of Labour Time during a Typical Working

Ablosh Peasant Association	Hrs.	Mins.	Gerbi Peasant Association	Hrs.	Mins.
Feed husband & children		10	Feed husband & children		15
Fetch water	1	–	Clean house		15
Clean house		15	Collect dung from garden		30
Collect dung from garden		30	Coffee break	4	–
Feed hens		5	Collect fuelwood		30
Coffee break		45	Fetch water		30
Collect fuelwood	4	–	Take food & water to husband in field	1	30
Take food/water to husband/children in field (highlands)		30	Work in field	4	–
Work in fields	3	–	Cook evening meal	1	–
Pound spices		30	Eat		45
Cook evening meal		45	Wash dishes		15
Collect water	1	–	Collect water		30
Eat	1	–	Bathe children		30
Wash dishes		15	Make injera and wot (sauce) for following day	2	–
Bathe children		30			
Make injera and wot (sauce) for following day	2	–			
Total:	16 hours	15 minutes		16 hours	30 minutes

Table II.14, above, shows the allocation of labour time during a typical working day as reported by one woman respondent in Ablosh, and by one woman respondent in Gerbi. The length of the working day of both of these women was over 16 hours. Out of the 16 hours the work time spent on domestic tasks ranged from 12 to 13 hours, and these data do not include additional occasional tasks such as washing clothes and going to the market.

In Gerbi, women respondents also complained that the forced daily attendance, on the payment of fine, at literacy classes for up to 3 hours a day simply increased their working day as they had to work longer hours to make up the lost time. At the same time, respondents reported that the compulsory attendance of children in school reduced the amount of child labour available to the household. Children were expected to attend school on 6 mornings a week. Ablosh didn't have a school, and what literacy classes there were do not appear to have been compulsory as respondents reported rarely attending them.

Sickness

At both survey sites, sickness, and malaria in particular, affected the availability of household labour. Malaria, commonly found in the hot lowlands of southern Wollo, was was generally seen by informants as the main cause of sickness in the study areas. In Gerbi, villagers benefited

from their recent incorporation into a Malaria control programme implemented jointly by CONCERN, a locally based NGO, and the Ministry of Health. The programme, which had been in operation in some lowland areas of southern Wollo since the latter part of the 1980s, was extended to include Gerbi in late 1989 early 1990. However, many of the informants in Gerbi had long suffered from this recurring illness and Malaria was still regarded by respondents as a problem. At the time of the survey, the programme had not reached the western lowlands of Kallu and, in Ablosh, Malaria, a particularly debilitating sickness, was frequently mentioned by informants as a serious labour constraint. Among the sample households, 12 households (57%) in Ablosh, and 15 households (28%) in Gerbi, had one household member sick with Malaria in 1991, and one household in Ablosh had 2 household members sick with Malaria in 1991.

II.8 LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

Some aspects of the importance of animals in the production systems of the study areas were touched upon in the previous section. It is nevertheless important to stress the close relationship between crops and livestock. Livestock need to be fed from the land and its products; land needs to be cultivated with the use of livestock. The dung of livestock fertilizes the land and the yield from the land is threshed using livestock.

The Relative Importance of Animals

Except for poultry, all kinds of animals were ranked as more or less equally important, including, cattle, mules, donkeys, goats, and sheep in Ablosh; and including, cattle, mules, donkeys, camels, and goats, in Gerbi.

The importance of oxen for ploughing, and the importance of pack animals for transporting inputs and produce, was discussed in the previous section. Mules, donkeys, and, in Gerbi, camels, were also important for trade and as a source of income for those renting them out, while female camels were a source of milk. Goats and, in Ablosh, sheep, were valued because of their relatively faster reproductive rate, compared with the bigger animals, and their relatively greater resistance to drought, compared with cattle, and were used as a means of accumulation and as a source of savings that could be sold in times of need. These animals were also important for their dairy products, including milk, and butter which provided a source of food and/or income. Animal hides, and skins were also a source of income. Despite the low valuation placed on poultry, both eggs, and chickens, were a source of income and/or food, particularly for the poorer members of the community.

Livestock Grazing

At both survey sites livestock were mainly grazed by family members. Exactly who did the herding depended on the household's composition, and the source of grazing. In general, children above the age of about 8 or 9, male or female, were responsible for taking livestock to graze, and for watering, and guarding animals. Where the household had no children, or the children were too young for such a responsibility, the herding was done mainly by women. There were 3 sources of grazing available to households, direct feeding of stubble after the harvest in which private crop land became communal pasture, private fodder from harvested crops, and communal pasture lands.

The communal grazing of livestock on the crop stubble of private crop land after harvest, and the ways in which

this strategy complemented crop cultivation through the fertilization of land, was discussed in the previous section. The second source of fodder was the feeding of livestock from the chaff of harvested crops. The residues from all types of crops were used as a source of feed for cattle, while the remains of pulse crops, which were more suited to the digestion of smaller livestock, were used as a source of feed for goats and sheep. The importance of this source of fodder was that it could be stored and used when necessary. At the same time, those households without livestock could use their chaff as a source of income. However, as we saw in the previous section, in practice, the size of harvests and, thus, the amount of feed available from this source of fodder, varied between households.

The third form of grazing was the communal pasture areas of the Chaffa Valley. These grazing pastures were used by adjacent peasant associations and by the Afar, and other, pastoral communities from the surrounding eastern lowlands. The Chaffa Valley had been a communal pasture area for as long as people could remember.

In Ablosh, the Chaffa Valley was mainly used for grazing during the dry seasons. During the rainy seasons, livestock were grazed on communal pastures in the highlands. Cattle, goats, and sheep were driven down to the Chaffa plains during the dry season months of May and June, and from October to February. Donkeys and mules were generally kept at home because, as we have seen, pack animals were needed to transport goods between the highlands and the lowlands. Cows that could be milked were also kept at home. In addition, during ploughing and threshing time oxen, and other livestock, were brought back to the homestead.

Men, and boys above the age of about 12 years, were responsible for livestock grazed in the lowlands, while women, and younger children above the age of about 8 years, were responsible for the care and maintenance of animals kept at the homestead. Men and boys took turns in spending from one to two nights in the lowlands to look after animals. Animals kept at the homestead were taken to graze on the communal pastures early in the morning and were brought back to the homestead in the evening. The herding of animals in the highlands during the rainy season was the responsibility of women and children.

Those households with livestock, but lacking the necessary male labour, and those households with only a few livestock, mainly used the highland grazing areas. Out of a sample of 21 households that had livestock, 9 households (43%) reported using only the highland grazing areas in 1991 because they had only a small number of livestock; and 4 households reported using only the highland grazing areas because of shortage of labour.

The shortage of grazing due to the expansion of crop cultivation observed by McCann (1986) in his study of farming practices in the agricultural highlands of Lasta in northern Wollo, was not mentioned as a problem in Ablosh - perhaps because crop cultivation in Ablosh was not restricted to the highlands. According to informants, grazing conditions were 'very poor' after the long drought of 1984. With the return of 'good' seasonal rains during 1985 and 1986, the condition of pastures improved. At the time of the survey, the condition of pastures and prospects for grazing were generally described as 'good'. Although crop yields were directly affected by 'poor' seasonal rains over the period 1988-1991 (see Section IV.5), grazing was not reported as a problem by respondents. This suggests that rainfall

during this period provided sufficient moisture for grazing areas.

In Gerbi, livestock were grazed on the Chaffa plains close to the village during the dry seasons and were driven southwards during the rainy seasons. As in Ablosh, women and children were mainly responsible for grazing, watering, and guarding animals. During the dry season months of May and June, and from October to February, livestock were taken to the communal pastures close to the village in the early morning and were brought back to the village in the evening. Men, and boys above the age of about 12 years, were responsible for animals grazed on the distant, southern plains during the wet seasons. As in Ablosh, whether or not households in Gerbi used the wet season pastures depended in part on the availability of male labour, and in part on the size of the herd. Out of a sample of 38 households that had livestock at the time of the survey, 8 households (21%) did not use the wet season pastures in 1991 because they had too few animals; and 5 households (13%) did not use the pastures because of shortage of male labour.

In Gerbi, the condition of the dry season grazing pastures close to the village and the prospects for grazing were generally described by respondents as 'poor'. The poor condition of these grazing areas was a result of overgrazing and was blamed on villagization and the forced changes in herding practices. The problem, as seen by informants, was the forced concentration of livestock onto a much smaller grazing area than that used in the past when people lived in dispersed settlements. Overgrazing was reported as most serious close to the river which was the only watering point for livestock.

The problem was aggravated by the fact that the river flooded the grazing areas during the rainy seasons. Over large areas of the grazing pastures soils had become compacted and water logged as a result of these seasonal floods and the trampling of animals and people and this was seen as a serious problem by informants. According to informants, appeals to the Ministry of Agriculture by the peasant association for permission to create a river diversion to prevent the flooding, and for the use of a tractor to plough the compacted areas, had gone unheeded.

The structural arrangement of the new village caused additional problems for livestock management. The village was organized in a grid-like pattern, with rows of houses separated by narrow passageways. These passageways to the huts were generally seen by informants as too tight for the movement of livestock. The problem was aggravated during the rainy seasons when all the trampling contributed to a muddy terrain. This increased the difficulties of moving animals in and out of the village. A further complaint voiced by livestock owners was that gardens, where livestock were kept overnight, were too small, although the size of this problem increased with the size of the herd and the size of the garden. Although most of the gardens were of uniform size, some gardens were visibly much larger than others.

However, some livestock owners had no gardens and this created very real problems. These were households that were among those households formed after the completion of the villagization process. The village site allowed little room for population expansion and households formed since the completion of the village were simply clustered together at the extremities of the village. For livestock owners without gardens, worries included where to put the animals and a fear that their livestock

could roam during the night and be killed by nightly predators.

In the general perception of environmental degradation, and in the literature, degradation of communal grazing land is assumed to be the result of over-stocking by livestock owners. The general criticism laid against livestock owners is that they accumulate herds beyond the land's 'carrying capacity'. (e.g., Timberlake, 1985; Harris, 1989; FAO, 1986; World Bank, 1986). This argument is associated with Hardin (1968)'s thesis, The Tragedy of the Commons, and the idea that a structural contradiction exists between the actions of individual livestock owners and the long-term common good. Proposed solutions include, destocking (in practice restricting the number of livestock to a size that grazing could support in the driest years), changes in animal husbandry practices, and privatisation of grazing areas. In the context of Ethiopia, these proposals, with the exception of the latter prescription which has not, yet, surfaced on the environmentalists agenda, can be found, for example, in the works of Constable, 1984, & 1985; Hurni, 1988; Berhan and Egziabher, 1989; IUCN, 1986; GOE/IUCN, 1990.

In the context of the case studies, the assumption that livestock owners have <u>too many</u> animals, is discussed below. However, as the findings on the deterioration of grazing pastures in Gerbi peasant association clearly show, a more direct cause of over-grazing in the study area was the forced change in herding practices as a result of the policy of villigization.

In sum, there were 3 sources of grazing available to households, direct feeding of stubble after the harvest in which private crop land became communal pasture, private fodder from harvested crops, and communal pasture

lands. The forms of grazing available led to complementary strategies. Which one was used depended on the season, crop yields, the type of livestock, the size of herds, and the type of labour available to the household. Herding was done with the use of household labour, with tasks allocated according to age and gender.

Distribution of Livestock

Table II.15 below shows the distribution of livestock among sample households in Gerbi peasant association in 1992. The data are based on a sample of 38 peasant households and give the distribution of oxen, goats, donkeys/mules, and camels. Over fifty per cent of the households did not have the pair of oxen necessary for ploughing.

Table II.15

Distribution of Livestock Among Sample Households in Gerbi Peasant Association, 1992[1]: Ownership of Oxen Related to Other Types of Animals.

oxen	goats 7-12	1-6	0
>2	1	3	5
2	2	5	1
1	–	9	4
0	–	4	4

oxen	donkeys/mules 3	2	1	0
>2	2	3	–	4
2	–	2	6	–
1	–	–	2	11
0	–	–	1	7

oxen	camels 4	3	2	1	0
>2	1	–	2	1	5
2	–	–	–	–	8
1	–	–	–	–	13
0	–	–	–	–	8

[1] Based on a sample of 38 households

The number of oxen was on average 2, ranging from 0 to 4 oxen per household. Nine of the households (24%) had from 3 to 4 oxen; 8 households (21%) had a pair of oxen, 13 households (34%) had only one ox, and 8 households (21%) had no oxen. The distribution of goats was only slightly

less skewed. The number of goats was on average 3, ranging from 0 to 8 goats per household. The number of donkeys/mules was on average 1, ranging from 0 to 3 per household. Only 4 of the households (11%) owned camels. Camels were very expensive, costing around 1000 ETB., and were considered by all informants as a clear indicator of wealth.

As the data show, most of those households without oxen, or with one ox, were also without other types of animals. Thus, these households not only lacked draught animals for ploughing, they were also had no animals for sales, dairy products, and for transport. Thus, if we look at animals in terms of need - and not simply in terms of land use or grazing - then clearly the assumption that livestock owners have too many animals does not fit the situation in Gerbi. Nor does it fit the situation in Ablosh.

Table II.16

Distribution of Livestock Among Sample Households in Ablosh Peasant Association, 1992[1] Ownership of Oxen Related to Other Types of Animals.

oxen	sheep & goats 7-12	1-5	0
>2	1	3	–
2	–	6	2
1	–	6	–
0	–	1	2

oxen	donkeys/mules 3	2	1	0
>2	2	2	–	–
2	–	–	5	3
1	–	–	2	4
0	–	–	1	2

[1] Based on a sample of 21 households

The distribution of livestock among sample households in Ablosh, in 1992, is given in Table II.16, above. The data are based on a sample of 21 peasant households and show the distribution of oxen, sheep and goats, and donkeys/mules. Forty three per cent of the households lacked the necessary pair of oxen for ploughing. The number of oxen was on average 2, ranging from 0 to 4 oxen per household. Four of the households (19%) had from 3 to 4 oxen, 8 households (38%) had a pair of oxen, 6 of the households (29%) had only one ox, and 3 of the households (14%) had no oxen. The distribution of pack animals was also highly skewed. The number of pack animals was on average one, ranging from 0 to 3 per household. As the data show, most of those households without oxen, or with only one ox, also had no pack animals. The distribution of sheep and goats was less skewed and was on average 3, ranging from 0 to 8 per household. Two of the households had no animals at all, both of these households were headed by women.

Within households, only a small number of women respondents reported owning animals. Out of a sample of 28 women respondents in Ablosh, and 58 women respondents in Gerbi, only 3 (11%) of the women in Ablosh, and only 7 (12%) of the women in Gerbi, owned animals. Of the 3 women in Ablosh, 2 of the women owned one cow, and one woman owned 2 cows. In Gerbi, one woman owned 3 cows, 4 of the women owned 2 cows, and 2 of the women owned one

cow. In all of these cases, the women reported acquiring the animals from their parents at the time of their first marriage. A further 4 women in Ablosh, and a further 6 women in Gerbi, had owned from 1 to 2 cows before the drought of the mid-1980s, but these animals were sold during the drought to buy food.

In reality, the 'ownership' of animals by these women was only partial, since the women had no control over their animals. In all of these cases, the women reported that they had no control over the off-spring of their animals, and no control over income generated from the sale of dairy products, nor could they sell the animals without the permission of their husband.

This lack of animals in the study areas is partly explained by the loss of animals through forced sales during the 1984/5 drought. The distribution of livestock before and after the drought in the study areas is discussed in Chapter III. However, Tables II.15, and II.16, below give the distribution of livestock before the drought in Gerbi, and in Ablosh, respectively. As the data show, before the drought the distribution of animals was less skewed. Thus, in Gerbi, 17 households (45%) had 2 or more oxen before the drought, 25 households or 66% had one ox compared with 34% in 1992 (see Table II.15 above), and 6 households or 16% had no oxen compared with 21% in 1992. As Table II.17 below shows, the

distribution of other types of animals was also less skewed.

Table II.17

Distribution of Livestock Among Sample Households in Gerbi PA, Before 1984/5 Drought[1]: Ownership of Oxen Related to Other Types of Animals.

	donkeys/mules				
oxen	4	3	2	1	0
3+	-	-	7	1	4
2	-	-	-	5	-
1	-	-	1	5	19
0	-	-	-	-	6

	sheep & goats		
oxen	6-10	1-5	0
3+	-	12	-
2	-	5	-
1	-	9	16
0	-	-	6

	camels			
oxen	3	2	1	0
3+	1	1	2	8
2	-	-	-	5
1	-	-	-	25
0	-	-	-	6

[1] Based on a sample of 38 households

Similarly, as can be seen from Table II.18 below the distribution of Oxen among sample households in Ablosh before the drought was also less skewed. Nineteen households 90% had 2 or more oxen before the drought compared with 57% in 1992.

Table II.18

Distribution of Livestock Among Sample Households in Gerbi PA, Before 1984/5 Drought[1]: Ownership of Oxen Related to Other Types of Animals.

	donkeys/mules				
oxen	4	3	2	1	0
3+	1	2	2	-	-
2	-	-	-	6	8
1	-	-	-	-	-
0	-	-	-	1	1

	sheep & goats		
oxen	6-10	1-5	0
3+	-	1	4
2	-	9	6
1	-	-	-
0	-	1	-

[1] Based on a sample of 23 households

However, this seeming inability of these households to rebuild their herds since the drought cannot be explained

by natural regeneration given the time lag between the drought and the timing of the survey. If we consider, for example, that sheep and goats reach maturity at 5 to 7 months, and that the duration of pregnancy is only five months, we would expect to see an increase in these smaller animal herds around mid-1987. (See, Cliffe, et., 1991) Again, the age of maturity for cattle is around 13 months and the duration of pregnancy is 9 months, thus we would expect to see an increase in cattle by the end of 1987. This suggests that part of the explanation for the seeming inability of these households to rebuild their herds must be that they are having to sell their animals at a rate which does not allow them to rebuild their herds, and may even be forced to sell their reproductive animals.

Access to Oxen for Oxen-short Households

There were 3 forms of access to oxen for households that either had no oxen, or that had only one ox: through relatives; sharing of oxen, and renting.

Only 2 of the sample households that either had no oxen, or that had only one ox, depended on relatives for access to oxen. These were two women headed households in Ablosh that had small gardens. Both of these women had sons living in the village that ploughed for them.

The sharing of oxen among households with only one ox was common in both study areas. Within these ox sharing arrangements, two ox owners agreed to share their oxen for one or two seasons. The agreement was that each ox owner

loaned his ox to the other every other day during the ploughing and the threshing seasons. Thus, each ox owner had access to a pair of oxen on alternate days. Of the 13 sample households in Gerbi, and the 6 sample households in Ablosh, that had only one ox at the time of the survey, all of these households reported sharing oxen in this way in 1991.

A feature of this practice of ox sharing was that neither of the households incurred any loss of labour. At the same time, the fact that landholdings were ploughed on alternate days, as opposed to one household completing it's own ploughing requirements first, meant that each household was able to minimize delays in the timing of ploughing. For households operating in a highly variable climate, delays in the timing of ploughing could restrict both the amount of land cultivated and the choice of crops grown, and thereby adversely affect the size of harvests and, thus, the food availability and income levels of households.

This type of arrangement for accessing oxen contained elements similar to those identified by Robertson (1987) in his study of share-crop contracts in Africa. Although the resource shared here was oxen, as opposed to crops, Robertson's approach is nonetheless applicable in that he suggests that informal institutional arrangements for accessing resources in rural communities need not necessarily be exploitative to either party to the contract. Rather the relationship may be one which enables households with complementary endowments to combine resources in such a way as to share the burdens of risk in situations where there are often important risk factors outside their immediate control, such as weather.

Those households without oxen, and without relatives to plough for them, were forced to rent oxen from the

wealthier members of the community. In Ablosh, these rental payments were in kind. In gerbi, the payments were in labour.

Within the rental agreements reported by respondents in Ablosh, a fixed amount of grain, ranging from 2 to 3 qtls., was paid to the oxen-owner, irrespective of the size of the annual harvest. These payments could correspond to one-fifth of the annual harvest in a good year, and one-third of the annual harvest in a poor year, and in a bad year the peasant borrowing the oxen may even have to purchase grain to be able to pay the oxen-owner. As the following case study illustrates. In 1991, a poor rainfall year, Abdul's annual harvest was 6 qtls. For the rental of a pair of oxen he paid 2 qtls., or one-third of his annual harvest. Abdul reported an expected yield of 9 qtls in a 'good' year, thus, these payments in a 'good' year correspond to just over a fifth of his annual harvest. It should be recalled that these payments for oxen were in addition to the poor peasants other commitments, including land and agricultural taxes.

In Gerbi, the labour payments in exchange for oxen were widely known and were uniformly applied. The peasant borrowing the oxen worked for the oxen-owner for one day in exchange for the loan of one ox for one day, and worked for 2 days in exchange for the loan of a pair of oxen for one day. Thus, if the peasant cultivated 4 timad, roughly one hectare, he had to work for 8 day's for the oxen-owner as payment for the rent of two oxen.

At the time of the survey, the pay for one day's wage labouring on the farms of wealthier members of the community was from 4 to 5 ETB. The post-harvest price of a quintal of maize in January-February 1992, was around 70 ETB. Given the price of labour and the price of grain, this suggests that this form of payment was the cheapest

alternative for the peasant. However, for the peasant supplying the labour, these labour payments meant that labour-time was taken from his own fields and this could adversely affect his own coming harvest. Of the 8 sample households in Gerbi without oxen that rented a pair of oxen in exchange for labour in 1991, none of these households had a surplus of labour. The size range of these households was from 4 to 6 persons per household. In addition, the oxen-owner naturally ensured that his own ploughing was completed first. Thus, the peasant supplying the labour had to wait and this could delay the timing of his own ploughing and negatively affect the size of his harvest

These rental arrangements for oxen enabled those households owning 2 or more oxen to accumulate and thereby reinforced household differentiation within the study areas. As shown in Tables II.15, and II.16, above, by far the majority of the sample households without oxen were also without other types of animals, including pack animals. Among the sample households in Gerbi, 88% of the pack animals, and 100% of the camels, were owned by those respondents that had 2 or more oxen. This suggests that these respondents rented pack animals to accumulate. A similar picture emerges when we look at Ablosh. Among the sample households in Ablosh, 83% of the pack animals were owned by those respondents owning 2 or more oxen. (See Tables II.15, and I1.16, above.) Thus, the consequences of the rental arrangements for pack animals were the same as for oxen.

What these findings indicate is that, among the sample households, the ownership and use of animals was the basis of wealth in both study areas. The unequal distribution of animals, and of oxen in particular, enabled the richer households to become richer and made it difficult for the poorer households to 'take off' from

their poverty. The importance of livestock as the basis of wealth and social differentiation in rural communities is confirmed by other studies on farming systems in the agricultural highlands of Ethiopia. See, for example, McCann (1987)'s recent study of farming systems in Lasta, northern Wollo. (See, also, Cliffe, et.al., 1991.)

II.9 TRADE

Much of the trading that occurred in the study areas was carried out at markets in the local low-land towns of Kemisse (which was also the awraja capitol), Harbu, and Morkoy. Monetary and non-monetary exchanges were transacted also within and between communities, although the latter was more common among the highland communities in Ablosh.

All of the respondents met at least some of their consumption requirements through involvement in trade. The basic foods - grains and beans - consumed by non-peasant households had to be met through exchange; while at least part of the agricultural shortfall among peasant households was supplemented through trade. In addition to these basic foods, salt, coffee, sugar, and oil, had to be bought. There were also occasional expenses on manufactured goods, such as, kerosene, matches, razor blades, cloth, and shoes. Various payments to the state - taxes, levies - as well as peasants', and womens', association membership fees, up to, and including in, 1991, were all paid in cash and were, thus, met through involvement in trade.

Transactions involving livestock, other than poultry, were always carried out by men, while women tended to be involved in small-scale exchanges, the selling of butter, eggs, chickens, and small quantities of grains and spices.

However, women were also involved in the brewing and selling of 't'ella', the local beer, a trading activity that was common at both survey sites. Among the sample households, 2 of the female heads of households in Ablosh earned money by brewing and selling 't'ella'. These were 2 widowed women, both of whom had a young child to support. The women either sold the beer locally, retail (a glass at a time) or wholesale (a bottle at a time), or took it to sell in the local lowland town of Morkoy. The profit made by these women from these beer sales was about 4 ETB. per bottle. In addition, both women also made 'injera' as a by product from the fermented barley which they also took to sell in town. This trade provided these women with a small, but regular source of income.

In addition, women were involved in the sale of fuelwood, which, for some households, also provided a regular source of income. In 1991, fuelwood sales provided a regular source of income for all 16 of the non-peasant sample households in Gerbi, and for one of the two non-peasant sample households in Ablosh. The latter household, and 11 of the 16 households in Gerbi were all headed by divorced women.

All of these 12 female heads of households reported that the cash earned from selling fuelwood was their only source of income in 1991. Eleven of these women collected the fuelwood and took it to sell in the local town on a daily basis. As we have already seen, the collection of fuelwood was a particularly arduous task and none of these women had access to a pack animal.

At the time of the survey, a bundle of fuelwood sold in the local towns fetched from 4 to 5 ETB. per bundle, depending on the quality of the wood. Thus, assuming that the women sold a bundle of fuelwood everyday, the weekly

income earned by these women was from 28 to 35 ETB. per week. The daily income earned from these fuelwood sales was the same as the wage rate for daily labour in Gerbi. However, the demand for labour locally was highly seasonal (see below) and selling fuelwood for these women was the only means of earning a regular income. All of these 11 female heads of households had children to support, ranging from 1 to 3 children per woman. The twelfth respondent, an elderly woman who lived alone, reported that she sold fuelwood only twice a week because she was 'old' and 'tired'.

This trade in fuelwood was important both for female heads of households and for married women. For married women, cash earned from selling fuelwood was the only income over which they had any control. Although, as described throughout this section, women were actively involved in the production, processing, and marketing of exchange values, none of the women respondents in the study areas had control over income generated from land-related or livestock products. Trade in fuelwood was seen by married women respondents as a means by which they could generate small amounts of money to buy things that their husband objected to spending money on, such as cloth for a new dress or, in times of sickness, medicines for themselves and/or for their children. More importantly, the cash from fuelwood sales enabled the women to save small amounts of money which they could draw on in the event of divorce.

The opportunities for generating income in this way for these married women was, however, limited. Both because of the women's existing labour commitments which limited the amount of time they could spend on this activity, and because of the control men had over women's mobility. At both survey sites, married women could not go to town without first acquiring their husband's permission.

However, not all married women respondents had control over the income from this trade. Within the poorer peasant households, and within the non-peasant households, cash earned from fuelwood sales was in all of these cases controlled by the husband.

The selling of 'sexual favours' by female heads of households was not uncommon at the survey sites, although only one of the female heads of household in our sample was involved in the selling of sexual favours. This was a young divorced woman in her late-twenties living in Ablosh. The woman lived alone with a young daughter of about 2 years of age. The respondent began selling sexual favours shortly after her divorce (her second divorce) in 1983. Some of her 'men friends' that visited her lived within the community, but she also had 'men friends' living in town that she regularly visited.

The importance of this trade in fuelwood and in the selling of sexual favours for these women needs to be seen in the context of the lack of alternative opportunities for income generation in the study areas, and in the nature of gender relations described in Section II.5 above

During 'normal' years, these trading activities provide female heads of households with small but regular amounts of cash. However, as we shall see in Chapter V, during the drought of the mid-1980s, these female heads of households were the most vulnerable members of the community.

II.10 WAGE LABOUR

At the time of the survey, none of the sample households had members engaged in wage labour away from the community. In Gerbi, wage labour locally was an important source of income for non-peasant households. The demand

for labour was mainly for agricultural labour working on the farms of the wealthier members of the community. According to informants, the daily wage rate for this work ranged 4 to 5 ETB., depending on the task involved. The wage rate was the same for both men and women. However, this demand for labour was highly seasonal. Labour demand peaked during the belg harvest month of June, and during the meher season months, September-November. Five of the non-peasant households depended for part of their income on cash earned from selling their labour locally. In all of these cases, both the husband and the wife sold their labour.

Conclusions

This chapter discussed the resource base in which people in the case studies sought to survive. The findings presented in Section II,5, show that in both study areas the distribution of land was highly unequal. In Gerbi, arable landholdings were on average 4 timad, ranging from 2 to 14 timad; and, 16 (30%) of the sample households had no land. In Ablosh, landholdings were on average 6 timad, ranging from 2 to 14 timad, and 2 (4%) of the households had no land. Our findings also show that there was no correlation between family size and size of landholdings.

This unequal distribution of land was partly explained by the nature of the relationships between the PA leaders and the PA members. The former, through their control over land set the terms of access to land which enabled them to accumulate resources in their own interest. Poorer members of the community, lacking sufficient resources with which to bribe the PA leaders were, thus, effectively excluded from accessing land.

However, both of the landless households in Ablosh, and 11 (69%) of the households without land in Gerbi, were headed

by divorced women. Landlessness among these women headed households was explained by the nature of gender relations. Traditionally, women, with the exception of widows, did not have access to land in their own right and this situation was not altered by the land reform.

In Section II.5, we indicated that ownership and the use of animals, and not land, was the main source of differentiation among peasant households. Over 50% of the sample households in Gerbi, and 43% of the sample households in Ablosh, lacked the necessary pair of oxen for ploughing. In Gerbi, 13 (34%) households had only one ox, and 8 (21%) households had no oxen. Six of the households (29%), in Ablosh, had one ox, and 3 (14%) households had no oxen.

The findings also show that most of these households without oxen, or with one ox, were also without other types of animals. Thus, these households not only lacked draught animals for ploughing, they also had no animals for sales, dairy products, and for transport. In fact, in Ablosh, two of the peasant households had no animals at all. Both of these were headed by women.

Households short of oxen were forced to depend on richer peasants for access to oxen. And, excepting those cases of ox-sharing between people with the same limited resources, the terms of exchange facing oxen-short households were highly exploitative. Rental payments were in kind (grains) or in labour; the former reduced the amount of food available to the poor peasant households, and the latter could mean a loss of labour to the poor peasant household at crucial times of the agricultural cycle and adversely affect the size of his harvest. The tendency for oxen-owners to give priority to their own landholdings also means that the poor peasant risks delays in the timing of his own ploughing, which in turn could affect the timing

of planting, reduce the amount of land cultivated, and negatively affect the size of his harvest.

At the same time, these rental arrangements enable those households owning 2 or more oxen to accumulate resources and thereby reinforce differentiation. It was also the case that those households owning two or more oxen also owned more of the pack animals. The consequences of the rental arrangements for pack animals were found to be the same as for oxen.

This highly skewed distribution of animals was partly explained by forced animal sales during the drought of the mid-1980s and partly by the need to sell animals at a rate that does not allow sufficient time for the replenishment of herds.

Another factor affecting agriculture and livestock production was shortage of labour. The finding that shortage of labour was generally considered a problem in Ablosh sharply contradicts the popular notion that the main constraint on agriculture in the highlands of Wollo, and northern Ethiopia generally, is overpopulation. Some households, 16 (42%) households in Gerbi, and 3 (14%) households in Ablosh, had access to non-household labour.

Landless households in the study areas were mainly dependent on cash earned from fuelwood sales and on local wage labouring opportunities. Fuelwood sales was shown to be the most important source of income for women, and for women heads of households in particular. This was a particularly arduous and time consuming task and none of these women had access to a pack animal. Other sources of income generation for women included brewing beer and, in one reported case, selling sexual favours.

Thus, in both survey areas, the degree of differential access to resources was significant. It is not simply that there is differentiation, the point is that differentiation matters. The types and amounts of resources available to different groupings shape the options and strategies for survival. Chapter III discusses precisely these issues within the context of the drought and famine of the mid-1980s.

CHAPTER III

HOUSEHOLD RESPONSES TO THE DROUGHT AND FAMINE IN WOLLO IN 1984-85

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we describe the different strategies pursued by people in the study areas during the 1984/5 drought and famine, and discuss the effects of people's actions for their future strategies of survival. Previous work on local responses to drought and food shortage in Wollo, and elsewhere in Ethiopia, (e.g. Cutler and Stephenson, 1984; de Waal, 1991; Dessalegn Rahmato, 1988 and 1991) has usefully documented a series of different household and community mechanisms for 'coping' with drought, but has tended to leave unexamined the specific situations and actions/strategies of different individuals and household groupings.

In Section III.1, we first identify the different social categories in the study areas. In the following three sections we discuss the extent of aridity in the study areas during the 1984/5 drought and the impact of the drought on agriculture and livestock production. In both study areas the most commonly reported means of accessing food during the drought was through market purchase. Income for these grain purchases originated from a variety of sources including, animal sales, sales of fuelwood and other cash crops, wage labour, and sale of household, farming, and personal assets. These various responses are discussed in Sections III.5 to III.11. The effects of food aid, and the 'Derg's' resettlement campaign, in the study areas are briefly discussed in Sections III.12 and III.13, respectively. The conclusions on the actions that people took, and the outcome of those actions, is discussed in Section III.14.

III.1 DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS BY STRATATUM

Table III.1 below shows the distribution of sample households by stratum in each of the study areas in the immediate pre-drought period. Peasant households are stratified on the basis of their ownership of livestock which, as we described in the previous chapter, was the main source of differentiation among peasant households in the study areas. Poor peasant households are those households without oxen; these households were dependent on richer peasants for their access to oxen and also sold their labour. Middle peasant households are those households with one to two oxen, and other types of livestock, and richer peasants are those households with two or more oxen and other types of livestock. These households, in addition to owning 2 or more oxen also had larger herds and owned more of the bigger more valuable animals, donkeys, mules, cows and, in Gerbi, camels. The non-peasant households are those households without land who were dependent for their livelihoods on a combination of petty trading activities and local employment opportunities.

Table III.1

Distribution of Sample Households, by Stratum, in the Study Areas in the Immediate Pre-drought Period.

	Ablosh PA		Gerbi PA	
	No. of hhs.	%	No. of hhs.	%
Rich peasant	5	19	17	28
Middle peasant	16	59	25	42
Poor peasant	4(2)[1]	15	8(2)	13
Non-peasant	2(2)	7	10(8)	17

[1] Figures in brackets refer to women headed households.

Middle peasant households were predominant in both study areas, accounting for 59% of households in the

highland case study, and 42% of households in the lowland case study. Rich peasant households accounted for 19% of households in the highland study, and for 28% of households in the lowland study; while poor peasant households accounted for 15% of households in the highland study, and 13% of households in the lowland study.

Two of the 4 poor peasant households in the highland study, and 2 of the 8 poor peasant households in the lowland study, were headed by women. Non-peasant households (i.e. landless households) accounted for 7% of households in the highland study, and for 17% of households in the lowland study. Both of the non-peasant households in the lowland study were headed by women; and 8 of the 10 non-peasant households in the lowland study were headed by women.

III.2 DROUGHT, AGRICULTURE, AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

The Drought

It is generally accepted that the drought in central and south-eastern Wollo (south-west Wollo was unaffected by the drought of the mid-1980s) began in early 1984 with the failure of the belg, spring, rains. (RRC, 1984; RRC/EEPG, 1987; see also Degefu, 1987) According to the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission there was 'no rain at all' in the belg producing areas of Wollo during the 1984 belg season (RRC, 1984 : 4). These failed belg rains were the followed by 'much below average' rainfall during the 1984 kerempt season (RRC, 1985). Rainfall during the 1985 belg season, was also 'poor' and 'untimely' (RRC, 1986). The 'cycle of drought ended' with the return of more favourable and 'adequate' rainfall during the 1985 kerempt season (1985).

However, this descriptive account of the aggregate pattern of rainfall in Wollo during 1984-1985 masks the variation in the distribution of rainfall between localities and obscures the timing and pattern of rainfall at the local level. The timing of precipitation - relative to ideal times for planting, germination, maturation - is as important as the absolute amount of seasonal or monthly precipitation for the development of crops and for livestock production. (Farmer and Wigley, 1985; Glantz, 1987).

In order to elicit information on the drought in the case study areas, respondents were asked to indicate the on-set and duration of the drought of the mid-1980s and to describe the pattern of rainfall (see Tables II.1, and II.2) . In both study areas respondents reported that the drought began in early 1984 with the failure of the belg spring rains and lasted for one year. Except for some light rainfall that fell over a two-day period in the latter part of May, the climate in both study areas in 1984 was characterized by extremely prolonged dry conditions. In both study areas respondents reported 'no rainfall at all' during the belg season (mid-February-end-April); 'no rainfall at all' during the kerempt season (mid-July-end-September); and 'no rainfall at all' during the bega (dry) season (October-January). The drought ended in early 1985 with the return of the belg rains which fell in both study areas. These rains were reported 'good' by respondents in both study areas. Rainfall was also received in both study areas during the 1985 kerempt season. These rains were also reported 'good' by respondents in both study areas.

The Impact of the Drought on Agricultural Production

The impact of the drought on agricultural production in the case study areas was clearly devastating. In both study areas, peasant respondents all reported that they

had 'no belg harvest at all' and 'no meher harvest at all' in 1984. With peasant households forced to leave their lands idle during the drought, the incomes of those households dependent on employment within the villages were also directly affected as, in both study areas, agriculture was the main source of labour demand. This latter issue is discussed in Section II, below; here, we describe the impact of the drought on household food availability among cultivating households.

The linkage between drought and famine is often posited simplistically: drought results in crop failure which in turn inevitably leads to mass starvation. Household food availability among peasant households is not simply determined by a drought year alone, however, we also need to take into account the previous years' harvest and stocks. In order to elicit information on household food availability among peasant households during the drought year, respondents were asked to state the number of months' food supply they had at the beginning of 1984 (i.e. the drought year). The number of months' food supply as reported by peasant households is shown in Table III.2 below. What the Table shows, first, is that there was no direct relationship between the drought and household food availability among the peasant households in the case study areas.

In both study areas rich peasant study areas rich peasant households had more than sufficient food stocks from the previous year's harvests to survive the drought. In Gerbi, rich peasant households had an average of 25 months, or just over two years', food supply. The number of months' food supply per household ranged from 19 to 32 months. In sharp contrast, middle, and poor, peasant households had an average of 5.8 and 2.6 months food supply, respectively. For middle peasant households the number of months food supply ranged from 5 to 8 months;

while the range for poor peasant households was 2½ to 3 months.

Table III.2

Number of households and number of months' food supply at the beginning of 1984, as reported by sample households

	Gerbi PA		Ablosh PA	
	Food supply no. of months	No. of hhs.	Food supply no. of months	No. of hhs.
Rich peasant	19	1	18	2
	20	1	20	1
	22	1	24	2
	24	9		
	28	1		
	30	3		
	32	1		
	Average per hh.: 25		Average per hh.: 21	
Middle peasant	5	11	5	10
	6	9	6	5
	7	3	7	1
	8	2		
	Average per hh.: 5.8		Average per hh.: 5.4	
Poor peasant[1]	2½	4	2	1
	3	2	2½	1
	Average per hh.: 2.6		Average per hh.: 2.2	

[1] Excluding women-headed households

Similarly, in Ablosh, rich peasant households had an average of 21 months' food supply; the number of months' food supply per household ranged from 18 to 24 months. Middle, and poor, peasant households had an average of 5.4 and 2.2 months food supply, respectively. For middle peasant households the number of months food supply ranged from 5 to 7 months; while the range for poor peasant households was 2 to 2½ months. Let's now see

what other resources/sources of income households had, especially those in deficit.

In both study areas, the most commonly reported means of accessing food during the drought was through market purchase. Income for these grain purchases originated from a variety of sources including, animal sales, sales of fuel wood and other cash crops, wage labour, and sale of household, farming, and personal assets. First we shall look at livestock.

III.3 DROUGHT, GRAZING AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

Grazing

Chapter II gave evidence of the distribution of livestock; but of course these are not fixed assets and were also affected by drought. In both study areas, respondents reported that grazing conditions during the prolonged drought of 1984 were 'very poor'. Although some rainfall was received in both study areas during the latter part of May, according to informants, this rainfall was not useful for crops and was described as too 'light' and as 'too short' to relieve the effect of the prolonged absence of rainfall on grazing pastures. In addition to the direct impact of drought, respondents reported that additional pressures on grazing in 1984 were created by the influx into the grazing areas of the Afar, and other pastoral communities from the more arid eastern lowland areas of Awsa. These pastoralists had themselves been forced westward because of drought and reduced grazing in the eastern lowlands.

In addition to the increased pressure on grazing, respondents in both study areas reported that the immigration of these pastoral communities into the grazing areas and the resulting heavy concentration of animals increased the risk of animal deaths from disease.

In this respect, livestock owners in ablosh were better placed to minimize the risk of animal deaths from disease than livestock owners in Gerbi. In Ablosh, respondents reported moving their animals to higher ground in the highlands in order to reduce the risk of animal deaths from disease. In Gerbi, respondents reported that animals were unsuited to high altitudes, thus, the possibility of moving animals to higher ground in order to minimize the risk of animal deaths from disease was not an option open to them. At the same time, the influx of pastoral communities from surrounding areas into the grazing areas was seen by respondents in Gerbi as confirmation of the lack of better grazing elsewhere. None of the respondents in Gerbi reported migrating to other lowland areas in search of better grazing.

Livestock production

For some households the reduction in grazing was mitigated by access to fodder. In both study areas, rich peasant respondents all reported that they had access to sufficient amounts of fodder to feed their animals throughout the drought. The average number of months' of fodder supply owned by rich peasant respondents in Ablosh during the drought was 3; the range of fodder supply per household was from 2 to 4 months. In Gerbi, the number of months' of fodder supply owned by rich peasant respondents was 3.6; the range per household was from 3 to 5 months. All of these respondents also reported buying fodder locally to feed their animals after their own fodder supplies ran out.

Although all middle peasant respondents reported having some fodder during the drought, none of these respondents reported having enough fodder to feed their animals throughout the drought. The number of months' fodder supply owned by middle peasant respondents in ablosh averaged 1.6. The range per household was from 1 to 3

months. In Gerbi, the average number of months' fodder supply reported by middle peasant respondents was 1.8; the range per household was from 1 to 3 months'. Only 3 of these middle peasant respondents reported buying fodder to feed their animals after their own fodder supplies ran out. Of the poor peasant respondents, only the 2 poor peasant households in ablosh owned animals; neither of these households reported having, or purchasing, fodder during the drought.

III.4 SALES OF ANIMALS DURING THE DROUGHT

In both study areas the reduction of livestock during the drought was extremely high. The reported number of animal losses through death, however, was much lower than the reported number of animal losses through sale for all types of animals. Animal sales was more common among rich and middle peasant respondents. The main reason for animal sales during the drought reported by middle and poor peasant respondents was to buy food, although some middle peasant respondents reported selling animals to generate cash to enable them to take-up more lucrative income earning activities. In contrast, rich peasant respondents all reported selling animals during the drought to ensure that they got some return on their investments. This comment, made by a rich peasant respondent in Ablosh, is typical of the responses given by rich peasant respondents to the question of why animals were sold during the drought.

> "Oxen are very expensive, it is better to sell and get something back. If you don't sell, and they die from disease you lose everything."

Tables III.3, and III.4, below give the reported reduction in animal herds through animal sales and through animal deaths during the drought in Gerbi, and in Ablosh, respectively. The reported reduction in

animal herds during the drought by peasant strata is discussed below. The reduction in animal herds during the drought was 55% in Gerbi and 49% in Ablosh. As the data show, animal losses through death during the drought accounted for only 15, and for only 20, per cent of the total number of reported animal losses in Gerbi, and in Ablosh, respectively.

TABLE III.3

Reported Reductions in Livestock in Gerbi During the Drought through Animal Sales and Animal Deaths.

Gerbi Peasant Association

	Total no. of Original Herd No.	No. sold as animal losses	% of total losses %	No. died as % of total losses %	
Camels	7	-			
Oxen	72	53	48	91	5 10
Cows	326	185	137	74	48 26
Donkeys/mules	27	12	12	47	-
Sheep&goats	77	32	28	88	4 14
Total	509	282	225	79	57 20

TABLE III.4

Reported Reductions in Livestock in Ablosh During the Drought through Animal Sales and Animal Deaths.

Ablosh Peasant Association

	Total no. of Original Herd No.	No. sold as animal losses	% of total losses %	No. died as % of total losses %	
Oxen	48	38	35	92	3 8
Cows	102	77	58	75	19 25
Donkeys/mules	21	6	6	100	-
Sheep&goats	40	30	29	97	1 3
Total	311	151	128	85	23 15

In both study areas the highest rates of reduction were among oxen and cows. The reduction rate in oxen and in cows in Ablosh was 79% and 75%, respectively. Ninety-two per cent of these oxen losses, and 75% of the losses in cows, was through animal sales. In the lowland study

the rate of reduction in oxen and in cows was 74% and 57%, respectively. Ninety-one per cent of these oxen losses, and 74% of the losses in cows, was through animal sales. In both study areas, the extremely high reduction rate in oxen, the principal means of draught power, was the factor that was weighted much more highly than any other reason as presenting the greatest obstacle to recovery in the aftermath of the famine (this issue is discussed further below).

The reduction rate in pack animals and in sheep and goat herds in Gerbi during the drought was 47 and 42 per cent, respectively. Forty seven per cent of these losses in pack animals, and 88% of the losses in sheep and goats, was through animal sales. In Ablosh, the reduction rate in sheep and goats and in pack animals during the drought was 75 and 28 per cent, respectively. Ninety seven per cent of these losses in sheep and goat herds, and 100% of the losses in pack animals, was through animal sales. As Table III.3 shows, camel herds fared best, there was no reduction in camels in the lowland study during the drought. That no losses were reported for camels can be explained by the fact that these very expensive animals (c. ETH.Birr 1000) were owned by the wealthiest households in the survey and were highly valued by these respondents as means of transport and means of trade. Camels, moreover, can withstand drought better than cattle.

Who was Doing the Buying?

Respondents in both study areas reported that animals were sold in Kemisse market, a roadside market in the lowlands of south-Kallu renowned for its livestock trade. In all reported cases of animal sales, respondents reported that animals were bought by 'big merchants from the south of the country'. That merchants from the south of the country were active in purchasing livestock

throughout Wollo during the drought was confirmed by the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) in Kemisse (personal communication).

MOA records in Dessie also show that merchants from the south of the country exported around 44,132 head of cattle and 23, 018 pack animals out of Wollo during the latter part of 1984 and the first quarter of 1985 (cited in RRC/EPPG, 1987). According to these same data, the livestock exported out of Wollo by these merchants was destined for Addis Ababa, Asmara, and Gondar, thus, indicating that animal herds in Wollo as a whole were reduced during the drought given the likelihood that animals sold in these terminal markets would have been slaughtered for meat.

However, Rahmato (1987, and 1992), in his recent study on drought and famine in Ambasel, north eastern Wollo, indicates that merchants from south-western Wollo were also active in purchasing livestock during the drought. The livestock purchased by these merchants was not exported, but was driven to drought-free areas in south-west Wollo. In some cases, the animals bought by these merchants were returned and resold to the original owners in the post-drought period. According to Rahmato, a number equivalent to 25% of the same animals sold in Ambasel during the drought was brought back and resold to the original owners after the drought.

From his findings, Rahmato, argues that livestock merchants provide an invaluable service to rural communities during times of drought. However, this assessment of the nature of these social relationships obscures the highly unequal terms of exchange faced by those forced to sell livestock during droughts and masks the extent to which many of these same livestock merchants were also active in the grain trade. In both study areas respondents reported buying grain at

exhorbitant prices from the same 'big merchants' to whom they sold livestock.

Movements in the Livestock/Grain Terms of Trade During the Drought.

RRC/EPPG (1987), reports that in south-central and south-eastern Wollo the terms of trade between livestock and grain suffered a drastic decline during the drought. Cutler (1984), and Baulch (1985), report the same exchange rate movements for northern Wollo. These movements in the livestock/grain terms of trade during the drought were due to a combination of declining livestock prices and increasing grain prices. The Ministry of Agriculture, Kemisse, reports the following typical prices for livestock in Kemisse market for the period 1982-83 and 1984-85. As Table III.5 shows, livestock prices fell drastically during 1984-85. The average price of oxen, for instance, declined by 85%.

Table III.5

Livestock Prices in Kemisse Market 1982-83 and 1984-85 (in ETH. Birr)

	1982-83	1984-85
Oxen	350-450	40-80
Cows	300-400	40-50
Sheep/goats	50-70	10-20
Donkeys/mules	100-150	30-40
Camels	1000	-
Poultry	4-8	3-4

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, kemisse.

The price of oxen, and the price of cows, reported by the MOA for the drought period is, moreover, slightly higher than the drought prices reported by respondents, but that implies that respondents were not way off. In both study areas, the reported prices received by respondents ranged from 40 to 65 ETH. Birr for oxen, and

from 25 to 35 ETH. Birr for cows. Respondents in both study areas reported that livestock prices declined slowly during the first quarter of 1984, and fell dramatically thereafter.

Table III.6, below, shows the prices of the three main cereal crops, teff, sorghum, and maize, during the period 1983-1985, as reported by the Ministry of Agriculture, Kemisse. Grain prices in Wollo normally fall to their lowest levels during the post harvest months' of January-February, and reach their highest levels during the pre-harvest period from end-July to end-September. (see also, Cutler, 1984; Baulch, 1985; RRC, 1986.) As can be seen from the Table, there was

Table III.6

Grain Prices in Kemisse Market 1982-83, 1984, and 1985
(in Eth. Birr. per qtl.)

	1983		1984		1985	
	Jan/Feb	Aug/Sept	Jan/Feb	Aug/Sept	Jan/Feb	Aug/Sept.
Teff	60	110	60	200	220	170
Sorghum	50	75	57	180	220	155
Maize	35	55	35	165	190	130

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Kemisse

no increase in the seasonal price of grains during January/February 1984. There was, however, a huge increase in the seasonal price of grains during the second half of 1984 and the first half of 1985. During the second half of 1984 the seasonal price of teff was almost double that for the same period in 1983. The increase in the seasonal price of sorghum and maize for the same time periods was 140 and 200 per cent, respectively. Prices for all three cereals peaked during the first half of 1985 and only began to fall with the return of more favourable kerempt rains during the latter part of 1985.

This combination of declining livestock prices and rising grain prices during droughts has been noted in other studies on drought and famine elsewhere in Africa. (e.g. van Appledorn, 1981; Hesse, 1987; Mortimore 1988). Sen (1981), and Seaman and Holt (1980), also report a decline in the livestock/grain terms of trade during the Ethiopian famine of 1972-74. Interestingly, from his analysis of exchange rate movements during the Ethiopian famine of the early 1970s, Sen concludes that the decline in the terms of trade was due to a fall in livestock prices only. According to Sen, grain prices remained stable during the Wollo famine of the early 1970s. (For a reassessment of Sen's analysis, see Cutler (1984).)

The Average Value of Livestock Holdings Before, and During, the Drought.

The average value of livestock holdings before, and during, the drought in the case study areas is shown in Table III.7 below. The calculations are based on the average price of livestock reported by the Ministry of Agriculture, kemisse, shown in Table III.4 above.

What Table III.7 shows, first, is that in both study areas the distribution of animal wealth was highly skewed. Given the altered terms of trade, the average value of livestock holdings owned by poor and middle peasant respondents was not sufficient to cushion the effects of the drought. In Ablosh, the value of livestock owned by middle peasant respondents declined to an average of 272 ETB during the drought, enough to purchase, for instance, about 1.6 qtls of maize during the second half of 1984. The value of livestock owned by poor peasant respondents declined to an average of 40 ETB, enough to purchase around 24 kg. of maize during the second half of 1984. In Gerbi, the average value of livestock owned by middle peasant respondents during the

drought was 202 ETB, enough to buy 1.2 qtls. of maize at late 1984 maize prices, while the poor peasant, and the non-peasant, households in the lowland study had no livestock to sell.

Table III.7

Average Value of Livestock Holdings Before, and During the Drought. (in ETH. Birr)

	Average value of livestock before drought	Average value of livestock during drought
Ablosh PA		
Rich	6,170	989
Middle	1,784	272
Poor	152	40
Gerbi PA		
Rich	7,148	1,355[1]
Middle	1,350	202
Poor	-	-
Non-peasant	-	-

Pre-drought average values per head in ETB: : Oxen 400, Cows 350, Camels 1000, Sheep/goats 60, Donkeys/mules 125, Average drought values per head: Oxen 60, Cows 45, Sheep/goats 15, Donkeys/Mules 35. Prices are based on average livestock prices shown in Table III.6 above.

[1] This value is distorted and is only given here for illustrative purposes. The distortion arises because 4 of the 17 rich peasant respondents in Gerbi owned camels. No deductions are made for camel prices during the drought due to lack of data.

Livestock Sales During the Drought by Peasant Stratum

The above discussion on the aggregate reduction rates in animal herds in the case study areas during the drought leaves unexamined the impact of reduced herds at the household level. In Table III.8, below, we show livestock ownership among the peasant household sample in Gerbi and in Ablosh both before and after the drought. What the Table shows, first, is that while all peasant households suffered reductions in animal herds

Table III.8

Livestock Ownership, by Peasant Stratum, Before and After the 1984/5 Drought in Ablosh and in Gerbi
(Number of households)

	Oxen				Sheep & goats			Camels				Pack Animals				
	>2	2	1	0	6-10	1-5	0	3	2	1	0	4	3	2	1	0
Ablosh PA																
Before drought																
Rich	5	-	-	-	-	1	4	-	-	-	5	1	2	2	-	-
Middle	-	16	-	-	-	9	7	-	-	-	16	-	-	-	6	10
Poor	-	-	-	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	1
Average livestock units: Rich 17.6, Middle 4.7, Poor .5																
After drought																
Rich	-	3	2	-	-	1	4	-	-	-	5	-	-	5	-	-
Middle	-	-	2	14	-	2	14	-	-	-	16	-	-	-	4	12
Poor	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	1
Average livestock units: Rich 7.6, Middle 0.3, Poor 0.2																
Gerbi PA																
Before drought																
Rich	12	5	-	-	-	17	-	1	1	2	13	-	-	7	6	4
Middle	-	-	25	-	-	9	16	-	-	-	25	-	-	1	5	19
Poor	-	-	-	6	-	-	6	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	6
Average livestock units: Rich 17.7, Middle 3.8, Poor 0																
After drought																
Rich	-	2	15	-	-	17	-	1	1	2	13	-	-	2	7	8
Middle	-	-	-	25	-	-	25	-	-	-	25	-	-	-	4	21
Poor	-	-	-	6	-	-	6	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	6
Average livestock units: Rich 10.5, Middle 0.08, Poor 0																

1 Livestock unit = an equivalent grazing unit = 1 oxen = 1 cow = 1 camel = 2 pack animals = 6 sheep&goats

during the drought, after the drought middle and poor peasant households were virtually cleaned out. This was because poor and middle peasant households had far fewer animals to begin with. Rich peasant respondents not only had larger herds in the pre-drought period, these

households also owned more of the bigger and more valuable animals, oxen, pack animals, cows, and, in the lowland study, camels.

In Ablosh, the number of animals owned by rich peasant respondents in the pre-drought period averaged 3.3 oxen, 2.8 pack animals, 13 cows, and 1 sheep/goat, ranging from 3 to 4 oxen, 2 to 4 pack animals, 10 to 18 cows, and 0 to 5 sheep/goats. After the drought these households owned on average 1.6 oxen, 2 pack animals, 5 cows, and 0.6 sheep/goats, ranging from 1 to 2 oxen, 2 pack animals, 5 cows, and 0 to 3 sheep/goats. In the pre-drought period, all 5 of these rich peasant respondents had more than the pair of oxen they needed to plough. After the drought, 3 households had 2 oxen, and 2 households had 1 ox.

The number of animals owned by middle peasant respondents in the pre-drought period averaged 2 oxen, 0.3 pack animals, 2.3 cows, and 2 sheep/goats. Of these 16 middle peasant households, 7 households had no sheep or goats, and 10 households had no pack animals. Whereas all 16 of these households owned the pair of oxen they needed for ploughing before the drought, after the drought, 2 of these households had only 1 ox, and 14 households had no oxen at all. The number of households without pack animals after the drought had increased from 10 to 12.

The loss of these pack animals to these households represented a loss of their means of transport and trade. All 16 households had no cows after the drought, while the number of households without sheep and goats had increased from 7 to 14. The loss of these animals to these households represented a loss of their meat and milk consumption, and a loss of their income from the sale of animal products.

The two poor peasant households in Ablosh had only 1.5 livestock units between them in the pre-drought period.

One of these respondents owned a donkey which he still had after the drought, while the second respondent had 3 goats, all 3 of which he sold during the drought.

A similar picture emerges when we look at Gerbi. Before the drought, rich peasant households owned on average 2.7 oxen, 1.1 pack animals, 0.4 camels, 19.7 cows, and 2.8 goats, ranging from 2 to 3 oxen, 0 to 2 pack animals, 0 to 3 camels, 10 to 26 cows, and 2 to 3 goats. After the drought these households owned on average 1.1 oxen, 0.6 pack animals, 0.4 camels, 8.2 cows, and 2.6 goats, 1 to 2 oxen, 0 to 2 pack animals, 0 to 3 camels, 6 to 12 cows, and 2 to 3 goats. Before the drought these rich peasant respondents had on average more than the pair of oxen they needed to plough. After the drought, only 2 of these households had a pair of oxen; and 15 of these households had only 1 ox. The number of households without pack animals after the drought had increased from 4 to 8.

Among the middle peasant respondents in Gerbi, the number of animals owned by these households before the drought averaged 1 ox, 0.2 pack animals, 0 camels, 2.4 cows, and 1.1 goats, from 1 ox, 0 to 2 pack animals, 2 to 5 cows, and from 0 to 5 goats. Of these 25 middle peasant households, 16 households had no goats, and 19 households had no pack animals. After the drought, none of these households had any oxen or any cows. The number of households without pack animals after the drought had increased from 19 to 21; and the number of households without goats had increased from 16 to 25.

This massive loss to these poor and middle peasant households of their future means of reproduction due to these animal sales during the drought clearly invites a reconsideration of the issue of what is meant by the notion of 'coping', so central to much of the literature on famine survival strategies. In both study areas, the drastic reduction in oxen was the factor that was

weighted much more highly than any other reason as presenting the greatest obstacle to recovery in the aftermath of the famine. In Ablosh 12 of the middle peasant respondents (75%), and the 2 poor peasant respondents (100%), all reported that they were unable to cultivate their landholdings when the belg rains returned in 1985 because of shortage of oxen. Sixteen (64%) of the middle peasant respondents (64%), and 2 (33%) of the poor peasant respondents in Gerbi also reported being forced to leave their land idle during the 1985 belg cropping season because they had no oxen and because of the general shortage of oxen.

That shortage of oxen is critical in postponing post-drought recovery is confirmed by other studies on the effect of drought in the agricultural highlands of Ethiopia. Mesfin Wolde Mariam (1980), for instance, reports that the loss of oxen during the Wollo famine of 1972-73 was the factor presenting the greatest obstacle to recovery and McCann (1984, and 1987), concludes the same about the 1984 drought. But this author also suggests that historical records show the importance of this factor during other droughts throughout this century. Fewer oxen not only result in less land being cultivated, but yields may also suffer as the limited number of oxen will be utilised for as long as possible, so some fields will be planted late

The effect on income and recovery is amplified by the loss of other animals. The loss of small animals, goats and sheep, with their much faster rates of reproduction, delays the replenishment of herds. These households had no goats or sheep, thus this strategy for survival was not an option and they therefore faced the problem of how to get back animals. In Chapter II, we gave evidence of the highly unequal distribution of livestock among peasant households at the time of the survey and

discussed the fact that not all of the respondents had been able to recover their herds since the drought.

III.5 EMPLOYMENT LOCALLY, AND MIGRATION

The main source of demand for labour locally was agriculture, working on the farms of the wealthier members of the community. During the drought there was not demand for this type of labour and people faced few alternative employment opportunities.

Employment locally

Only 2 (3%) of the sample households had members employed on a permanent basis both before and during the drought; both of these households were in Gerbi, and neither household had land. The main occupation of the male heads of these two households was that of forestry guards. Both men worked on an MOA conservation project and were paid on a food-for-work basis. The reported monthly food-for-work ration received by these respondents was 90 kgms. of maize and 4 ltrs. of oil. This work and, thus, the means of subsistence of these households was not affected by the drought. However, while the monthly food rations of these respondents were reported as being sufficient for needs, payments were at times delayed for up to as much as 3 weeks and these households had seek additional means of earning cash to buy food. Both of these forestry guards reported having to sell fuelwood to earn cash!

Some respondents reported finding work within the village working for wealthier members of community. Three of the sample households (13%) in Ablosh and 8 (15%)of the sample households in Gerbi, reported that they sometimes found work working for wealthier members of the community. Eight of these households were poor peasant households that were dependent for their livelihoods on casual wage labouring

and petty trading activities before the drought; and three of the households were middle peasant households.

In all of these households it was the male-head that found work and, in both study areas, respondents reported that, in general, men stood a better chance of finding work than did women because these, albeit limited, employment opporortunities involved work that was socially defined as 'men's work' and included such tasks as, fixing fences, building/repairing houses, well digging, rope-making, and chopping wood.

In Ablosh, the income by these men from these tasks ranged from 2-3 ETB per day. According to respondents, the daily wage for these tasks was the same both before and during the drought; although in real terms these wages were extremely low because of the high price of grain. In Gerbi, wages for these tasks fell from the pre-drought level of ETB 3-4 to ETB1-2 per day.

Only two women respondents reported finding work during the drought, both of these women lived in Ablosh, and in both cases the women reported that they sometimes earned food during the drought, usually 'injera', by collecting fuel wood or fetching water for wealthier households in the village.

Migration in search of work

Migratory searches for work during the drought was not widely reported by respondents in either of the study areas, but was more common in the lowland study. In the highland study, only one man from one of the 16 middle peasant households reported leaving the village to find work during the drought. This man left the village to work

on his uncle's farm in Were Himeno awraja but, unable to find work in his uncle's village because of drought, he returned to the village after only 1 week.

In the lowland study, 2 men from 2 of the 6 poor peasant households, and 4 men from 4 of the 25 middle peasant households reported leaving the village during the drought to find work. Two of these 6 men, both poor peasants, went to Dessie. One of these respondents, unable to find work in Dessie, returned to the village after only 2 weeks; the second respondent stayed in Dessie for just over 3 weeks, during which time he worked for only 3 days.

The 4 middle peasant respondents were more successful. Three of these respondents went to Djibouti and worked for 9 months on cattle ranches owned by the Afar. The pay for this work was 160 ETB per month, plus food. The fourth respondent went to the Awash valley and worked for 6 months on a cotton plantation, also owned by an Afar. This respondent earned 120 ETB per month, plus food. Three of these 4 respondents reported sending some money back home to their families. These remittances ranged from ETB50 to 100.

However, these long distance migrations were expensive, thus, the choice of where to migrate to was conditioned by wealth. The 4 middle peasant respondents all reported that they were able to pay their expenses for these distant migrations from income earned through livestock sales. The following case studies illustrate the different migration experiences of 2 of these men:

Ebrahim, a poor peasant, was a married man and had one child. He left the village for Dessie in August 1984 to find work. He had no relatives in Dessie and couldn't afford to pay for lodgings, so he had to sleep on the streets. For the first 5 days he could find no work and

survived by begging. On the sixth day he found work in Dessie market loading sacks of produce. The work was low-paying manual labour, paid by the piece, and lasted for only 3 days. He stayed in Dessie for a further 9 days before returning to the village. During these 9 days he was unable to find work and survived by begging and was unable to bring anything back to the village for his family.

Hassan, a middle peasant, was also married with 2 young children. He had heard that work was plentiful in Djibouti and decided to leave for Djibouti in early August (1984), following the failed arrival of the kerempt rains. He sold his only ox for 60 ETB, and one cow, the last of his two cows, for 35 ETB and went to Bati to arrange for an Afar guide to take him across the desert.

On route to Bati he had to bribe 2 checkpoint guards with 10 ETB. each to let him pass. On his second day in Bati he left for Djibouti with a group of around 30 men after paying the Afar guide a fee of 50 ETB. The journey across the desert took 12 days on foot. On his arrival in Djibouti the Afar guide got him work on his uncle's ranch for a fee of 10 ETB. From his first month's wage of 160 ETB he sent his wife 100 ETB. Worried that his wife might not get the money he decided not to send any more money. He returned to the village the following June and bought a pair of oxen with the money he'd saved in Djibouti and was able to plant a meher crop.

Labour migrations out of farming areas are often cited as a cause of food insecurity (e.g. O'Brien, 1985, and 1986;). Commentators (e.g. Hussein, 1974;) on the Wollo famine of 1972-73 also sought to explain the cause of that famine in terms of the development of a seasonal migratory labour force in Wollo throughout the 1960s. The evidence from the case study areas does not reveal that seasonal labour migrations was as common in the study areas as in

northern and western Wollo before the famine. However, the evidence presented here also shows that labour migrations can also be a means of survival and, thus, should not be seen simply in terms of impoverishment.

Food for Work

Only 4 of the sample households reported having a household member employed on a food-for-work (FFW) project during the famine. Three of these were in Gerbi and one was in Ablosh. Of three repondents in Gerbi, two of these were the two forestry guards discussed above who were already employed on a FFW project, one, according to survey informants, was a relative of one of the PA committee members. However, the project, a road construction project set up by World Vision (an American Baptist Mission) only began in mid-1985 by which time most, if not all, of the respondents had already registered for food aid, thus, it is possible that people dintn't register for the FFW project because of the availability of this alternative source of food aid.

III.6 FUEL WOOD SALES

In both study areas, fuel wood sales during the drought were common among poor, middle, and non-peasant households. The 2 poor peasant household respondents in the highland study, and the 6 poor peasant household respondents in the lowland study, all reported selling fuel wood on a regular basis to generate cash before the drought. All of these households reported that fuel wood sales was their main source of income during the drought.

Twelve of the 16 middle peasant households in the highland study, reported that they sold fuel wood during the drought; and 19 of the 25 middle peasant households in the lowland study reported selling fuel wood during the drought. None of these households sold fuel wood before

the drought; thus, these fuel wood sales during the drought represented the forced adoption by these households of an alternative source of income. The 2 non-peasant households in the lowland study also reported selling fuel wood both before, and during, the drought.

Holt (cited in de Waal 1991) reports that in Wollo the price of fuel wood fell by more than half during the drought due to increased supply and falling demand. The same decline was reported by respondents in the case study areas. In both study areas, respondents reported that fuel wood sold for between 3-4 ETB per bundle before the drought. During the drought, a bundle of fuel wood sold for between 1-2 ETB.

In both study areas the gathering and sale of fuel wood was normally done by women and children. This division of labour was blurred during the drought as men joined women and children in this task. In Ablosh, the number of household members that sold fuel wood in the 2 poor peasant households during the drought averaged 2; the number of household members that sold fuel during the drought in the 12 middle peasant households averaged 2, ranging from 1 to 4 members per household.

In Gerbi, the number of household members that sold fuel wood in the 6 poor peasant households during the drought ranged from 2 to 3 members per household. The number of household members that sold fuel wood during the drought in the 19 middle peasant households averaged 2.6, ranging from 1 to 4 members per household. In each of the 2 non-peasant households, two household members sold fuel wood during the drought.

The adult members of these households had to work intensively to counter the lowered market price and high grain prices. The 2 poor peasant households in Ablosh, and the 6 poor peasant households in Gerbi, all reported that

the amount of fuel wood collected per adult member each day during the drought was increased from 1 to 2 bundles. The income earned from these fuel wood sales per household ranged from 1-12 ETB per day.

This gathering and sale of fuel wood was an arduous task. The amount of time spent gathering fuel wood by these men, women, and children, ranged from 3 to 5 hours per person per day in Ablosh, and from 4 to 5 hours per person per day in Gerbi. Respondents in Ablosh reported that they sold fuel wood in various lowland markets, including, Morkoy, Harbu, and Kemisse. Transporting fuel wood to these lowland markets took from between 2 to 4 hours on foot. In Gerbi, fuel wood was also sold in Kemisse and Harbu markets. However, the closer proximity of these markets to the lowland case study area meant that transporting fuel wood to these markets took less time, from between 1 to 2 hours.

For those households owning pack animals the task of gathering and transporting fuel wood to markets was made less arduous. However, only a minimal number of these households owned pack animals. In Ablosh, only 2 of the 12 middle peasant households, and only 1 of the 2 poor peasant households, were left with a pack animal. Similarly, in Gerbi, only 4 of the 19 middle peasant households owned a pack animal; none of the 6 poor peasant households, and neither of the 2 non-peasant households owned pack animals.

The long term effect of these fuel wood sales during the drought for forestry resources is difficult to know in quantitative terms as a result of the lack of localized studies on forestry resources in the case study areas. However, in neither of the study areas was shortage of fuel wood reported as being a problem by respondents. At the same time, however, 11 (16.6%) of the 66 women respondents in the lowland study, and 4 (13.3) of the 30

women respondents in the highland study, reported having to walk further to gather fuel wood since the drought.

Deforestation in Wollo, and in Ethiopia generally, is often mistakenly understood as being due to population expansion only. This single explanation for the observed reduction in forestry resources has prompted certain policy solutions including, population stabilization, land enclosure, restricting peoples access to existing and newly planted forests, the alienation of arable land for reafforestation schemes; and resettlement. (see, e.g., ADB/ECA, 1988; Belshaw, 1987, and 1989; Berhan, 1989; Constable, 1984; FAO 1986; FAO/UNDP 1988; Hurni, 1987, and 1988;)

The findings presented here, and our discussion on fuel wood sales in Chapter II, highlight the importance of fuel wood as a cash crop both in normal years and in times of stress. Thus, where deforestation is a problem in Wollo the causes are multiple and need to be addressed within the context of the lack of alternative income opportunities to off-set food deficits. Policies emphasizing land closures and the restriction of people's access to forestry resources, will only worsen the situation of the poorer community members and are unlikely to succeed in their objectives.

III.7 SALE OF OTHER CASH CROPS

Some respondents were able to generate cash during the drought from selling other cash crops, including tobacco and 'chat' (a plant indigenous to Ethiopia that contains a mild stimulant). Tobacco was more commonly sold by rich peasant respondents and was a lucrative cash crop during the drought. In both study areas, respondents reported that the price of tobacco remained stable during the drought. Before the drought, tobacco sold for 40 ETB per bundle during January-February, i.e. post harvest, and

for 600 ETB per bundle during September. All 5 of the rich peasant households in the highland study, and 15 of the 17 rich peasant households in the lowland study, reported that they sold tobacco during the drought to 'big merchants' from Dessie at 600 ETB per bundle. In all of these cases these respondents had tobacco stored from previous years' harvests and reported selling tobacco during the drought to generate cash for livestock repurchases after the drought.

One of the middle peasant household respondents also sold tobacco during the drought. This respondent grew tobacco before the drought but reported that because of the high labour demand of this crop, he could only grow small amounts. During the drought he had just over half a bundle of tobacco which he had stored from previous years' harvests. To make up the bundle, he sold his 2 cows and with this cash bought small amounts of tobacco from other villagers. He sold this bundle of tobacco to a 'big merchant' from Dessie for 600 ETB. With the cash from this sale he was able to continue buying and selling tobacco throughout the drought at a profit of 200 ETB per bundle sold.

Chat, a plant indigenous to Ethiopia contains a mild stimulant and is widely used for religious purposes, but is also commonly used as a means of staving off hunger pangs. In both study areas, respondents reported that chat was expensive during the drought. Before the drought a bundle of chat sold for less than 1 ETB; during the drought the price per bundle was from 1-2 ETB. Two middle peasant respondents in the lowland study reported that they bought chat in small amounts from surrounding villages and sold it in local market towns for 2 ETB per bundle. The profit per bundle was 1 ETB.

III.8 SALE OF HOUSEHOLD, FARMING, AND PERSONAL ASSETS

As shown in Table III.9, below, in both study areas sale of household and personal assets, such as clothing, during the drought was common among poor peasant respondents. The type of household assets sold by these respondents included water carriers, cooking pots, and coffee pots. Three of the 6 poor peasant households in the lowland study also reported selling farming equipment during the drought including, sickles, knives, and rope.

Table III.9

Sale of Household, Farming, and Personal, Assets During the Drought.[1] (Number of Households)

	Household Assets	%	Farm Equipment	%	Personal Items	%
Ablosh PA						
Rich	-		-		-	
Middle	-		3	19	-	
Poor	2	100	2	100	2	100
Gerbi PA						
Rich	-		-		-	
Middle	-		7	28	-	
Poor	6	100	3	100	6	100
Non-peasant	-		-		-	

[1] Excludes women-headed households

The sale of these household and farming assets by these households meant a loss of crucial means of consumption and means of production. Both of the poor peasant respondents, and 3 of the 16 middle peasant households in Ablosh, and all 6 poor peasant respondents, and 7 of the 25 middle peasant households in Gerbi, also sold sickles, knives, and rope during the drought. 25 middle

peasant households in Gerbi, also sold sickles, knives, and rope during the drought.

III.9 SOCIAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS

Within the literature on famine there is an on-going debate over the nature and extent of sharing within communities during times of stress. Part of the debate centres on whether communities, or even relatives, share or do not share food and other resources, such as cash, during famines. Evidence has been supplied to support both sides of the argument. (e.g. Pankhurst, 1985; Rahmato, 1987, and 1992; Vaughan, 1987; Shipton, 1990; Webb, et.al., 1992; and Webb, 1993.) In the case study areas, sharing food was more widely reported by respondents than cash loans. Cash loans and the extent of borrowing in the study areas are discussed below.

Sharing Food

The extent of food sharing during the drought as reported by respondents in each of the study areas is shown in Table III.10. The data refer to food shared in both senses of receiving and giving food. What the Table shows, first, is that in both of the study areas sharing food was more common among the middle peasant respondents.

Among middle peasant respondents in the Ablosh, 37% of these respondents reported sharing food during the drought. In Gerbi, 24% of the middle peasant respondents reported sharing food during the drought.

In contrast, none of the rich peasant respondents in Ablosh and only 6% of the rich peasant respondents in Gerbi reported sharing food during the drought. This was despite the fact that all of these rich peasant

respondents reported having more than sufficient food to survive the drought.

Among poor peasant respondents in Gerbi, 17% of these respondents reported sharing food during the drought. None of the poor peasant respondents in Ablosh, and none of the non-peasant respondents in Gerbi reported sharing food during the drought.

Table III.10

Food Sharing During the Drought as Reported by Respondents in the Case Study Areas.[1]
(Number of households)

	Gave food to others	%	Received food from others	%	Neither gave/ received food	%
Ablosh PA						
Rich	-		-		5	100
Middle	1	6	5	31	10	63
Poor	-		-		2	100
Gerbi PA						
Rich	1	6	-		16	94
Middle	2	8	4	16	19	76
Poor	-		1	17	5	83
Non-peasant	-		-		2	100

[1] Excluding women-headed households

As shown in the following case studies, in all reported instances of food sharing, the sharing of food was restricted to sharing between relatives. The form in which food was shared, however, varied from gifts of unprocessed grain to the sharing of cooked meals and/or other processed foods, such as injera.

Among the middle peasant respondents in Gerbi that reported sharing food during the drought, 2 middle peasant

respondents (8%) reported sharing food with relatives, and 4 middle peasant respondents (16%) reported receiving food from relatives. In Ablosh, one middle peasant respondent (6%) reported sharing food with relatives, and 5 middle peasant respondents (31%) reported receiving food from relatives. In all of these cases the shared food was in the form of cooked food.

In the case of the three respondents that shared food with relatives, all three of these respondents reported sharing injera, and sometimes cooked meals, with their parents when they could. In all of these cases the parents were elderly and lived in the village.

Sharing cooked food was not restricted to sharing between relatives living in the same village, however. The 9 middle peasant households that reported receiving food from relatives, received food from relatives living elsewhere. In all of these cases the households split-up, with women and children returning to the wife's natal village to stay with the wife's parents, while the men stayed behind. The decisive factor influencing the decision for these households to split along these gender lines as reported by respondents was the nature of land rights which were vested in men, combined with insecurity of land tenure. In all of these cases these male respondents reported fear of landholdings being 'taken' by the PA during their absence as the main reason for staying behind.

In the case of these women migrants, these women had an average of 3 children between them, ranging from 1 to 5 children per woman, and these return visits to their natal villages involved the women walking, with their children, over long distances and over often difficult terrain. The reported number of hours' spent walking to these natal villages by these women and children ranged from 4 to 9 hours'.

While all of these women respondents reported receiving food and shelter from their parents (thus, the help received from relatives by these respondents was not simply in the form of food), none of these women stayed in their natal villages for longer than a month. In all of these cases, these women respondents reported being forced to return to their own villages because of drought and food shortages in their natal villages and because parents were unable to support them. The reported number of weeks' these women respondents stayed with their parents before returning with their children to their own villages ranged from 2 to 4 weeks'.

Among rich peasant respondents in Gerbi, only one rich peasant respondent reported sharing food with a relative; 16 rich peasant respondents (94%) reported that they neither shared food, nor received food from others, during the famine. In Ablosh, all 5 rich peasant respondents (100%) reported that they neither shared food, nor received food from others, during the famine. In all cases where rich peasant respondents reported not sharing food, all of these respondents reported that they would have shared food with relatives if relatives had 'asked' for help.

In the case of the rich peasant respondent in Gerbi who reported sharing food during the drought, this respondent shared food with a married son who lived in the village. The respondent reported that he gave the son 3 qtls. of maize over a three-month period. According to the respondent, the maize was given to the son as a 'gift', not a loan.

None of the poor peasant respondents in the study areas reported sharing food with others during the famine. In both study areas, all poor peasant respondents reported that they were unable to help anyone but their own house-

hold. In Ablosh, none of the poor peasant respondents received food from others during the famine, and only one poor peasant respondent (17%) reported receiving food in Gerbi. In the latter this respondent reported receiving 12 kgms. of maize from his son-in-law who lived in a village some two hours' walking distance away. This maize was also given as a 'gift', not as a loan. However, this was a one time only 'gift' of food. According to the respondent, his son-in-law could not afford to share food a second time because the son-in-law was 'too poor'.

It has been suggested that families in Ethiopia survive long periods of hardship because of community support mechanisms which enable poorer community members to share food (and other resources) with wealthier households (Rahmato, 1988, and 1992). This argument clearly did not fit the situation in the areas under study.

None of the rich peasant respondents in either of the study areas reported sharing food with poorer community members outside of the family, and none of the poorer respondents in the study areas reported receiving food from wealthier community members outside of the family. This was despite the fact that in both study areas rich peasant respondents all reported having more than sufficient food stocks to survive the drought.

In both study areas, food sharing was restricted to sharing between relatives. However, the evidence presented here also shows that food sharing between relatives was dependent on the <u>ability</u> of relatives to share and, thus, indicates the need for caution in assuming that kinship ties automatically act as a buffer during times of stress (e.g. Iliffe, 1987; Hyden, 1980, 1983, 1986, and 1987).

Borrowing and Lending

Table III.11

Borrowing and Lending in the Study Areas During the Drought.[1] (Number of households)

	Loaned Grain	%	Loaned Cash	%	Borrowed Grain	%	Borrowed Cash	%
Abloosh PA								
Rich	-		2	40	-		-	
Middle	-		-		1	6	2	13
Poor	-		-		-		-	
Gerbi PA								
Rich	2	12	6	35	-		-	
Middle	-		-		1	4	3	12
Poor	-		-		-		-	
Non-peasant	-		-		-		-	

[1] Excluding women-headed households

Where it was difficult to find access to shared resources, some households resorted to borrowing. None of the respondents in the study areas had access to formal means of credit during the drought, and none of the respondents reported having a bank account or being a member of a community based savings scheme. In both study areas the main source of credit during the drought reported by respondents was 'rich' farmers.

Credit during the drought was in the form of grain or cash loans. The extent of borrowing and lending in the study areas during the drought is shown in Table III.11, above. What the Table shows, first, is that in both study areas only a small number of respondents had access to credit during the drought. None of the poor peasant, and none of

non-peasant, respondents in the study areas had access tocredit. Only 3 of the middle peasant respondents (19%) in Ablosh, and only 4 of the middle peasant respondents (12%) in Gerbi, reported borrowing during the drought.

Of these 7 middle peasant respondents that received credit during the drought, only one of these respondents reported receiving an interest free cash loan of ETH. Birr 20 from a 'friend'. This respondent was in Ablosh. The remaining 6 respondents that received credit (86%), received loans from 'rich farmers' living in the village. As shown in the following case studies, none of these loans were interest free.

Of the 2 respondents in Ablosh that received credit; one of these respondents reported borrowing 2 qtls. of maize from a 'rich farmer' and repaying the farmer 3½ qtls. of maize. Thus, the interest rate on this loan was 75%. The second respondent reported receiving a cash loan of ETH. Birr 75 from a 'rich farmer' and repaying the farmer ETH. Birr 130. Thus, the rate of interest on this loan was 73%.

Of the 4 respondents in Gerbi that received credit, 3 of these respondents received cash loans, and one respondent reported borrowing grain. All of these respondents reported borrowing from 'rich farmers' in the village. Of the 3 respondents that reported borrowing cash, one of

these respondents borrowed ETH. Birr 40, one borrowed ETH. Birr 50, and one borrowed ETH. Birr 100. The reported repayments on these loans were, respectively, ETH. Birr 80, ETH. Birr 75, and ETH. Birr 175. Thus, the rates of interest on these loans ranged from 50 to 100 per cent. The one respondent that borrowed grain, reported borrowing 1½ qtls. of maize from a 'rich farmer' and repaying the farmer 2½ qtls. of maize. Thus, the rate of interest on this loan was 67%.

None of the rich peasant respondents in the study areas reported borrowing during the drought. However, 10 of the rich peasant respondents reported giving credit during the drought. All of these loans were to non-kin. In Gerbi, 8 rich peasant respondents (47%) reported giving credit to non-kin during the drought. Two of these respondents reported lending grain, and 6 of these respondents reported lending cash. In Ablosh, 2 of the rich peasant respondents (40%) reported making cash loans to non-kin during the drought.

Despite the fact that only one of the 7 respondents that reported receiving credit during the drought received an interest free loan, all of the respondents that reported receiving credit and paying interest insisted that usury was prohibited under Islamic law and denied paying interest. In all of these cases the respondents referred to the interest paid as a 'gift from Allah'. Similarly,

the 10 rich peasant respondents that reported giving credit during the drought all denied charging interest. Rather, all of these respondents referred to the interest received on these loans as 'a gift provided by Allah'.

These findings show that in both study areas only a very small number of respondents had access to credit during the drought. Eighty-six per cent of these loans were arranged with the wealthier peasants. Interest rates on loans ranged from 50 to 100 per cent, payable in cash or kind. The interest rates reported in the case study areas were much lower than interest rates reported elsewhere in Ethiopia (e.g. Webb, (1993: 41) reports interest rates of between 50 and 300 per cent for survey sites in Shoa, Arsi, Sidamo, Gemu Goffa, and Hararghe); nevertheless, that so few respondents had access to credit during the drought indicates that the terms of credit were prohibitive. It is also unlikely that poor peasant respondents had the collateral to enable them to access credit. Hussein (1974), makes this point about the Ethiopian famine of the early 1970s. Loans became tighter as lenders began to demand sureties.

III.10 EATING WILD FOODS, AND REDUCING FOOD CONSUMPTION

Eating Wild Foods.

In both study areas eating wild foods during the drought was common among poor and middle peasant respondents. Among the wild foods consumed by respondents in the case study areas were , a type of 'wild cabbage' which was boiled and made into a type of broth; and the 'fruits' (berries) of a plant known locally as 'Aluma'. The 'fruits' of the 'Aluma' plant had first to be dried

before being ground and made into a type of bread. Other wild foods reported by respondents were the seeds of a plant known locally as 'Asenameeka', and the 'fruits' (berries) of the Shola tree. The 'Asenameeka' seeds, although bitter, have a taste similar to coffee and were used to make a drink which respondents called 'poor man's coffee' The 'fruits' (berries) of the Shola tree were either eaten in their raw form as berries or were mashed into a pulp and used as a thickener for broths. The gathering and processing of these wild food plants was done by women.

However, as we described in Chapter II, these wild foods are often supplementary foods, especially for the poorer members of the community and should not be seen simply as 'famine' foods (See also, Fleuret, 1986). The extent to which these forage foods were consumed by respondents during the drought and in 'normal' times is shown in Table III.12, below. What the Table shows, first, is that in both study areas all the poor and middle peasant respondents reported eating wild foods both during the drought and in 'normal' years. None of the rich peasant respondents in the study areas reported eating wild foods either during the drought or in 'normal' times.

In both study areas, middle peasant respondents all reported eating wild foods when food was short during the

pre-harvest period to supplement dwindling food reserves. In contrast, poor peasant respondents all reported that they always ate wild foods as part of their normal diet.

Table III.12

Eating Wild Food Plants During the Drought and in 'Normal' Years', by Peasant Stratum, and by Study Area.[1]
(Number of Households)

	During the Famine		During 'Normal' Years' Sometimes		Always	
		%		%		%
Ablosh Pa						
Rich	-		-		-	
Middle	16	100	16	100	-	
Poor	2	100	-		2	100
Gerbi PA						
Rich	-		-		-	
Middle	25	100	25	100	-	
Poor	6	100	-		6	100

[1] Excluding women-headed households

Reducing Food Consumption

Reducing food consumption during the famine was reported by respondents in both study areas. Reductions in food consumption ranged from reducing the quantity of food consumed per meal to going without food at all for several days. Reductions in food consumption during the famine, by peasant stratum, and by study area is shown in Table III.13. However, reducing food consumption was often graduated and intermittent. Thus, the data here refer to the most extreme reduction in food consumption reported by

respondents.

Table III.13

Reductions in food consumption during the famine, by peasant Stratum, and by study area.[1]
(Number of Households)

	Reduced the quantity of food per meal	%	Reduced no. of meals per day	%	Went without food for more than one day	%
Ablosh Pa						
Rich	-		-		-	
Middle	2	13	11	69	-	
Poor	-		-		-	
Gerbi PA						
Rich	-		-		-	
Middle	4	16	17	68	-	
Poor	-		-		2	33

[1] Excluding women-headed households

As can be seen from the above Table, in both study areas reducing food consumption during the famine was common among poor and middle peasant respondents; none of the rich peasant respondents in the study areas reported reducing their food intake.

The most extreme cases of reduced food consumption were reported by poor peasant households. In Gerbi, reported reductions in food consumption among poor peasant respondents ranged from eating less than 2 meals per day, 1 household (17%), eating less than 1 meal per day, 3 households (50%), and going without food at all for more than 1 day, 2 households (33%). Of the 2 poor peasant

households that went without food, one household reported eating no food at all for up to 2 days', and one household reported eating no food at all for up to 3 days'. Again, this method of dealing with food shortage clearly represents severe hardship and a lack of alternatives, rather than 'coping'.

Of those respondents that reported eating less than one meal a day the range of foods consumed by these respondents during these times included, plant roots and/or berries. In the highland study the 2 poor peasant households reported eating less than one meal a day. Both of these households also reported eating berries and plant roots at that time.

Reductions in food consumption among middle peasant respondents ranged from reducing the quantity of food per meal to eating less than one meal a day. In Ablosh, 2 of the 16 middle peasant households reported reducing the quantity of food per meal; 11 households reduced the number of meals per day; and 3 households consumed less than 2 meals per day. Of the 25 middle peasant households in Gerbi, 4 of these households reduced the quantity of food per meal; 17 households reduced the number of meals per day, and 4 households consumed less than 2 meals per day.

Consumption of seed stocks was also common among poor peasant households. The 2 poor peasant households in the Gerbi, and the 6 poor peasant households in the highland study, all reported that they ate their seed stocks during the drought. All of these households faced the problem of replacing seed when the 1985 belg rains returned. None of the respondents reported receiving seed in the form of aid after the drought, although 2 of these households reported that they purchased very small amounts of seed with cash earned from selling some of their food aid ration. Six of these 8 households reported needing their food aid to eat and that they had to borrow seed from the 'rich' peasants.

According to informants, in early 1985, a quintal (100kgs) of sorghum seed was selling at ETB 200 per quintal. Thus, to replace seed in a sufficient amount to sow 1 timad (roughly a quarter of a hectare) would require half-a-quintal of seed (see Chapter II) and would cost around ETB 100. In both study areas respondents reported that what aid in the form of seeds was allocated went to the PA leaders and to their kin. (See discussion on Food Aid below.)

III. 11 WOMEN AND DROUGHT

Ten of the household samples in Gerbi, and 4 of the household samples in Ablosh, were headed by women during

the drought. Of these 14 women, only 2 women, had land. None of the women owned livestock. The options open to these women during the drought were limited, as the following case studies illustrate. First, we describe the ways in which these women secured their subsistence before the drought.

Livelihood strategies before the drought

Of the 4 women in the highland study, 2 of these women were poor peasants, and 2 women were landless. The 2 poor peasant women, Amna, and Ralima, were both widows before the drought. Both of these women had children living with them during the drought. Amna had one child, a 5 year old daughter; and Ralima had 3 children, 2 daughters and one son, ranging from 3 to 6 years of age. Before the drought, these 2 women grew vegetables and pulses in the small gardens surrounding their homesteads. At the beginning of the drought year (i.e. 1984) Amna had 1 qtl. of pulses from the previous year's harvest; Ralima had 50 kgs. of pulses from the previous year's harvest. Both of the women also brewed beer (Tala) which they sold in the village and in local markets. The two women financed the making of beer by selling part of their crop. During the drought neither of the women could afford to finance the making of 'Tala' due to the high grain prices and the fall in demand for beer.

The 2 landless women in the highland study, were both divorcees. One of these women, Fatima, had one child living with her during the drought, a daughter, about 18 months old; the second divorcee, Sophia, an elderly woman, lived alone. Before the drought, Fatima earned her livelihood by working for wealthier households in the village either on their farms for a crop share, or collecting fuel wood and fetching water. She also earned cash sexual favours. During the drought a few of her 'men friends' continued to visit, but these visits were infrequent and the men could not afford to pay very much. Sophia also worked for wealthier households in the village before the drought, either on their farms for a crop share, or collecting fuel wood and fetching water.

In Gerbi, 7 of the 10 women-headed households were landless. All of these 7 women were divorced before the drought. The average size of these households during the drought was 3, ranging from 1 to 4. The average number of children these 7 women had between them during the drought was 1.8, ranging from 0 to 3 children per household. None of these households contained more than one adult.

Before the drought, these 7 women all earned their livelihoods by daily wage labouring on the farms of wealthier households in the village, and by selling fuel wood. Two of the women also earned income in the village by plaiting hair.

Three of these 10 women heads of households were married at the on-set of the drought and reported working on their husbands farms before the drought. During the drought the husbands of these 3 women all migrated in search of work and never returned to the village. Two of these men went to work on the coffee plantations in the south-west of the country, and one man went to work on the cotton plantations in the Awash Valley.

All 3 women reported that they received no remittances from their husbands during the drought, and 2 of the women reported learning after the drought that their husbands had remarried. The third woman reported that she didn't know what had happened to her husband. The number of children these 3 women had living with them during the drought averaged 2, ranging from 1 to 3 children per woman.

Responses

In both study areas, all of these women respondents reported fuel wood sales as their main source of income during the drought. The low market price and the high price of grain meant that the women had to work intensively in an attempt to secure their subsistence. Of these 14 women, 13 women reported collecting 2 bundles of fuel wood per day! And, none of the women had access to a pack animal.

One of the woman, in Ablosh, Sophia, an elderly divorcee, reported that she could only collect one bundle per day because she was too 'old and tired'. The income earned by these women from fuel wood sales ranged from 1-4 ETB per day.

Some of the women, 3 of the 4 women in Ablosh, and 3 of the 10 women in Gerbbi, reported that they sometimes earned food during the drought, mainly 'injera', by collecting fuel wood and fetching water for wealthier households in the village.

Only one of the 4 women in Ablosh, Sophia, the elderly divorcee, and only 3 of the 10 women in Gerbi, reported receiving food from a relative in the village during the drought. Three of the 10 women in the lowland study reported that their relatives were 'too poor' to share food with them during the drought.

All of the 4 women respondents in Ablosh, and all of the 10 women respondents in Gerbi, reported eating wild plants during the drought. The 2 peasant women in the highland study, Amna, and Ralima, also reported eating their seed stock during the drought. As with the poor male peasant respondents discussed above, these women also reported that they were able to buy a small amount of seed by selling some of their food aid ration.

Cutting back on consumption during the drought was reported by all 4 women in Ablosh, and by all 10 women in Gerbi. Three of the 4 women in Ablosh, and all of the 10 women in the lowland study reported cutting back to one meal per day. Two of the women in Ablosh, and 7 of the women in Gerbi reported going without food themselves for up to 2 to 3 days so as to be able to feed their children.

None of these women had very much in the way of assets to sell. The most commonly reported assets sold were household assets, followed by wood from houses. Two of the 4 women in Ablosh, and 9 of the 10 women in Gerbi, reported selling water carriers, cooking pot, and coffee pots. The loss of these assets meant the loss to these women of their means of consumption. For the 2 peasant women in Ablosh, the sale of these assets also meant the loss of their future means of production, as these pots were also essential for brewing beer. One of the women in Ablosh, and 8 of the women in Gerbi, also reported selling the wood from their houses.

Zumra, one of the 10 women respondents in Gerbi also reported selling one of the two dresses she owned. This dress was her 'good' dress which she only wore for weddings and other festive occasions. After selling the dress she stopped going to weddings because she was 'too ashamed'.

These women and their children were among those to be found in Harbu feeding shelter set up by CONCERN (an Irish NGO) in late October, early November, 1984. Tragically, one of the women in Ablosh, Fatima, reported that her 18 month old daughter died, and a further 3 women in Gerbi, also reported child deaths during the famine. Two of these women had two children and each woman reported that one of their two children died. The third woman report that both of her two children died. In all of the cases the children died while in the feeding centre in Harbu.

Several studies on famine in Africa present evidence of an increase in the breakdown of marriages during famines. Vaughan (1987: 34), for instance, reports that some matrilineal Malawians called 1949, the famine year many husbands left home, the year of 'many divorces'. Pankhurst (1984), makes the same point about the increased abandonment of women during the Great Ethiopian Famine of 1892. In contrast, Rahmato (1987, and 1992;) argues that there is no evidence to support claims of marital breakdowns in Wollo during the famine of 1984-85.

The findings presented here clearly show that marriages did break down in Wollo during the 1984-85 famine. However, whether or not marital breakdowns increased in the case study areas during the drought is difficult to ascertain, partly because of the smallness of the sample,

and partly because of the high frequency of divorce in normal times.

Nevertheless, as we discussed in Chapter II, the general poverty and thus vulnerability of these divorced women heads of households needs to be seen within the context of the nature of the prevailing gender relations within marriage and the gender property rights on divorce.

III. 12 FOOD AID

Food aid in the form of external rations and, as we have seen, to a lesser extent FFW opportunities, were of crucial importance to most of the villagers, and there is no doubt that it saved many lives. However, the general policy of Making PA chairmen responsible for the selection process meant that although many people registered for food aid were clearly in need, many were not.

The tendency, moreover, was double registering. In both study areas, all of the respondents reported that they were registered with both the RRC and CONCERN, and, as discussed above, 4 of the respondents were engaged in FFW projects with World Vision; 2 of these respondents were also employed in the Ministry of Agriculture conservation project.

Crucially, a complaint voiced by informants in both study areas was that people were forced to give a share of their ration to the PA leaders if they were to be included in the registration. One woman informant in Gerbi, for example, reported that she had to give up half of her ration. The borrowing of children from poorer households in order to be able to register for food aid was reported as common in both study areas.

Food aid distributions continued throughout the first half of 1985 and, as we have seen, for some of the respondents the benefits of food aid extended beyond immediate food needs. This was the case for those households described above who were able to buy small amounts of seeds from cash earned by selling some of their food ration and thereby replace some of their seeds consumed during the drought.

III.13 RESETTLEMENT

An estimated 376,298 Wolloans (Sivini, 1986) were resettled in the south-west of the country during the period November 1984 to end December 1985 during the 'Derg's' resettlement campaign (See Chapter I.) While we have no figures on the actual number of people resettled from the case study areas throughout this period, respondents in both study areas reported that 'many' people resettled during the drought. In both study areas, the PA committee was responsible for the recruitment of resettlers and a frequent complaint made by respondents in both study areas was that people had to 'bribe' the PA leaders in order to avoid resettlement. The same complaints were made concerning conscription for the army.

While the evidence presented here provides no insights into the number of people that resettled voluntarily or otherwise during the drought from the case study areas, our findings from the study areas do confirm claims that not all resettlers resettled voluntarily.

In Gerbi, 4 respondents were resettled in the south-western region of Kaffa during January 1985. Two of these respondents reported going voluntarily, and two respondents reported being forcibly 'taken by soldiers' while waiting for a food aid ration at a food aid distribution centre in Harbu, a small roadside town.

Both of the respondents that reported resettling voluntarily, were landless in the pre-drought period. The promise of 'land and oxen' in the new settlement areas was reported by these respondents as the reason for resettling. In both of these cases, only the husband and wife went to the new settlements, both respondents reported leaving their children with relatives with the intention of returning for the children when they were settled.

The 2 respondents that reported being forcibly 'taken by soldiers' while waiting for their food aid rations were both middle peasant respondents. In both of these cases the respondents were married men with children, but the men had gone alone to collect the food aid rations. The wives of these two respondents both reported that it was impossible to find out where their husbands had been taken to, 'no one' would tell them 'anything'.

In the highland study, the relatives of 2 respondents were forcibly resettled. One of these respondents reported that his father, along with 'many' other men, was 'taken by soldiers' while attending a funeral. The second respondent reported that his father was 'taken by soldiers' while waiting at a food distribution centre in Kemisse town. In both of these cases the men were sent to Illubabor in the south-west of the country.

III. 14 CONCLUSIONS ON PEOPLES ACTIONS DURING THE DROUGHT AND THE OUTCOME OF THOSE ACTIONS

This chapter discussed the actions that people took, and the outcome of those actions, during the drought and famine of the mid-1980s. We described the ways in which the different types and amounts of resources facing people to begin with shaped their options and put people in different survival camps. At the same time we showed that the actions that people take places them in wholly

new and irreversible situations and shapes their future options and strategies for survival.

In both study areas, women-headed households were shown to be the most vulnerable group. These women heads of households possessed the least assets and were faced with the least options. After the loss of human life, the most terrible loss was the massive loss of livestock to the poor and middle peasant households through forced animal sales. These animal sales represented the loss to these households of their future means of survival.

After the drought these households had no oxen and also lacked other types of animals. Thus, these households not only lacked draught animals for ploughing, they also had no animals for sales, dairy products, and for transport. In other words, these households found themselves in wholly new and irrevisible situations which shaped their options for post-drought recovery and their future strategies for survival. That not all of these households were able to rebuild their herds after the drought is discussed in Chapter II.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The focus of our research was to seek answers to the following questions: What were the effects of the array of forces at work on society on people's strategies for survival? What strategies did people pursue during the drought and famine of 1984/5. What was the end result of those actions, and what were the consequences for people's ability to recover? And, finally, "what feasible opportunities exist for changing a situation where inordinately large numbers of people go hungry?" (Jayawardena, 1990: vii) In this concluding chapter we first summarize our findings in the case study areas and then focus on this policy question.

IV.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS IN THE CASE STUDY AREAS

Contrary to the popular notion - held by people like Dessalegn Rahmato, (1984, 1988, 1991, 1992) for instance - the 1975 Land Reform did not equalize resources/incomes within the rural communities researched. There is still differentiation within rural communities. Our detailed discussion in Chapter II on resource distribu tion clearly showed that the degree of differentiation in the study areas was significant. The main source of

differention, moreover, was not land but the ownership and use of animals. The distribution of animals, and oxen, in particular was shown to be highly skewed. Also, most of those households without oxen, or with one ox, were also without other types of animals. Thus, these households not only lacked draught animals for ploughing, they also had no animals for sales, dairy products, and for transport.

Further, those peasants without oxen were dependent on richer peasants for their access to oxen. These rental payments - excepting for ox sharing between people with equally limited resources - were in kind (grains) or in labour. These payments in kind significantly reduced the amount of food available to the poor peasant household, while payments in labour could limit the amount of labour available to the poor peasant houshold at crucial times of the agricultural cycle and negatively affect his harvest. The tendency for oxen owners, moreover, is, naturally, to ensure that their own lands are ploughed on time. This delay could mean that the poor peasant's land is not ploughed on time, delay the timing of planting, reduce the amount of land cultivated, and negatively affect his harvest.

This unequal distribution of animals, and of oxen in particular, enables the richer households to become

richer and makes it difficult for the poorer households to 'take-off' from their poverty.

As our discussion, in Chapter II, on land distribution also showed, Rahmato's assumed equalisation of landholdings in rural areas did not fit the situtation in the study areas. Poorer members of the community were effectively excluded from accessing land as a result of the PA leaders abuse of their status and control over land. With the exception of widows, women were also excluded from access to land in their own right. For some households this inequality in the distribution of animals and of land was amplified by shortage of labour.

The point is that differentiation matters. It matters because the types of, and amounts of, resources that people have places them in different survival camps. As we have seen in Chapter III, divorced women heads of households had few resources other than a few personal possessions. During the drought, these women also had few options and were dependent on fuelwood sales which, during the drought, was one of the least remunerative of activities. These women and their children were among those to be found in the CONCERN feeding shelter in Harbu. Four of these 14 women heads of households also suffered the loss of their children.

Chapter III also discussed the massive loss of livestock to poor and middle peasant households during the drought through forced animal sales. These respondents all reported the general shortage of oxen as the main reason for leaving land idle when the 1985 belg rains returned. After the drought, these households, not only had no oxen for ploughing, they also had no animals for sales, dairy products, and transport. That these households were virtually cleaned out during the drought was because they had so few animals to begin with.

While the richer peasants also suffered the loss of animals these households all had larger herds to begin with. They also had stored wealth with which to replace animals after the drought. This same point has been made by McCann (1987: 256)

> "Available evidence strongly suggests that the distribution of the effects of famine closely parallels stratification and economic vulnerability already present in northern Ethiopia's rural society."

After the drought these poor and middle peasant households all faced the problem of how to get back animals. That none of these households had any of the smaller animals, such as goats, with their faster reprodutive rates, meant that another type of survival

strategy, the replenishment of herds, was no longer an option from their own resources/income. Thus, these households faced delays in rebuilding herds. That some households had not yet rebuilt their herds since the drought was discussed in chapter II.

IV.2 POLICY SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE FINDINGS

There is this argument that we need to understand the causes of famine if we are to get the right policy. However, as we have sought to emphasize here, after the drought and famine people found themselves in wholly new situations and were faced with a different set of options, and unless we know the effects of, and the outcome of, these different but interacting forces at work on society then no one policy is likely to be the right policy.

In this new policy environment - emphasizing recovery, regeneration promotion, and sustainability - the need is for polcies to be specifically designed to meet the existing situation facing different categories of people. New policies will fail if the existing situation is not taken into account.

The suffering caused by the massive resettlement of thousands of people during the Mengistu regime demonstrates the terrible and often unintended effects of

policies when we don't understand the existing situation. This policy was justified in terms of the perceived environmental degradation of the northern highlands. The argument was that there is degradation of the environment and that this degradation is irreversible hence the number of people must be reduced. But this is not necessarily the case. This is only looking at the problem in terms of landuse, and not in human terms. This simplistic two-way population/environment carrying capacity argument fails to consider the existing farming system and the broader political economy and the constraints on farming, or alternative techniques of farming, are often not considered.

Thus, in contrast to this single, and often simplistic explanation for food insecurity in Ethiopia's rural areas, our discussion in Chapter II indicates that the more direct causes of food insecurity in the study areas were lack of oxen for ploughing, and other types of animals, shortage of labour, and lack of alternative sources of income to meet food deficits. However - as we sought to emphasize in both of the empirical chapters - in both of the study areas there was a significant degree of differentiation both within and between the different household groupings in terms of people's accces to, and control over, these different resources. Thus, if policies are to achieve their objectives the specific constraints facing individuals and the different household groupings need to be taken into account.

FOOTNOTES

1 The lower figure of 40,000 comes from the estimate of 'total deaths due to famine between 40,000 and 80,000', suggested by Miller and Holt (1975: 171), but refers primarily to the earlier phase of the famine (i.e. 1972-3). For the total period 1972-5, Rivers, Holt, Seaman, and Bowden (1976: 335) estimate an 'an excess of a least 100,000 deaths due to starvation and associated diseases'. The higher figure of 200,000 represents mortality estimates presented in Shepherd (1975).

2 The main studies of the physical geography of Ethiopia are Mesfin Wolde Mariam, An Introductory Geography of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, 1970, by the same author, An Atlas of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, 1985; 0; and G.C. Last, A Geography of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, 1963.

3 Ethiopia. Population Census, 1984

4 A few writers have recently argued that the history of Ethiopia should begin with the late 19th century, implying that the country's history before 1900 refers to Abyssinia and not to Ethiopia. For instance, Addis Hiwet (1975: 1) notes, "The deep-seated myth that has for so long enshrined Ethiopia - both the name and the country - still blurs genuine historical understanding. Ethiopia's existence as a 'modern state' does not - as the ideologists of the ancient regime claim - extend beyond the 1900s....". For a view that maintains that the names Ethiopia and Abyssinia have been used inter-changeably to refer the highland kingdom see Margery D. Perham (1969), and John Markakis (1974).

5 The majority of these conquests took place between 1875 and 1898. For a general description of them see H.G. Marcus, 1975 The extent of destruction associated with the conquests varied with the resistance offered. In Wollega where this was minimal little destruction occurred, but in Kafa, for instance, which rebelled against paying tribute the destruction of life and property was great. For details of these conquests see Perham, 1969: 298-342; and Hiwet, 1975: 4-14

6 Detailed discussions of Ethiopia's complex land-holding patterns are found in Markakis, 1974; Stahl, 1974; Cohen and Weintraub, 1975; Donham, 1985; Pankhurst 1968; Brietzeke, 1975; Desalegn Rahmato, 1984; Pankhurst, 1965; Pausewang, 1992.

7 For a detailed account of the rist system see Allan Hoben, Land Tenure Among the Amhara, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1973. See also Markakis, 1974, and 1977; Pankhurst, 1968; Cohen and Weintraub, 1975; and Stahl 1974.

8 See, S.F. Nadel, 'Land Tenure on the Eritrean Plateau', Africa, XV111, No.1, Jan. 1946

9 Between 1942 and 1964 five Land Grant Orders were proclaimed by Haile Selassie. These granted between 20 and 40 hectares of government land (alienated land in the south of the country) primarily to members of the armed forces, civil service and patriots who had fought against the Italian occupation (1936-1941). Most of these groups were northerners. See Cohen and Weintraub, 1975: 61.

10 Detailed discussions on Haile Selassie's administrative reforms are found in Cohen and Weintraub, 1974; Stahl, 1974; Schwab, 1972; and Markakis, 1974.

11 An exception was Tigray province which was ruled by a native prince, Ras Mangasha Seyoum. See Markakis, 1974: 292.

12 Schwab, 1972: 27-28. For extensive discussions on the Gojjam revolt see Hoben, 1973; and Schwab, 1971.

13 Gilkes, 1975: 115; cf. Cohen and Weintraub, 1975, Table II, give figures for tenancy ranging from 39 to 75 percent.

14 For further details on the Afar and on development in the Awash Valley, see, also, Harbeson, 1978; Flood; 1976.

15 There are a number of accounts of the revolution. See, in particular, Markakis and Ayele, 1978; Markakis, 1981; Haliday and Molyneux, 1981; Hiwet, 1975; and 1984; Ottaway, 1978; Clapham, 1988.

16 'Public Ownership of Rural Land Proclamation', Negarit Gazeta. Proclamation No. 31 of 1975. The land reform is described in full in Koehn and Koehn, 1977: 3-16.

17 Under the ancién regime, for instance, smallholder, rural development 'package' projects introduced in the 1960s were concentrated in the wetter, traditional surplus producing, regions, such as Arsi; although, even here, the existing land-lord tenant relations prevented poorer peasants from adopting these innovative technologies (Stahl, 1973; Cohen,

1976). After the revolution, the Mengistu regime's rural development policy was also one of favouring the wetter, and traditional surplus producing, regions in general, and state farms in particular. For example, up to the mid-1980s, at least, it is estimated that state farms alone received some 90% of all agricultural sector resource allocations (Ghose, 1985; Griffin and Hay, 1985; Saith, 1985).

APPENDIX I

ETHIOPIAN FAMINE 1984-85 CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

Drought and Impending Famine: 1979-December 1983

1979 — Belg spring (February-May) rains and main Kerempt (June-September) rains inadequate and untimely in north-eastern province.

1980 — Belg rains poor.
Large parts of Eritrea, Tigre, Wollo and Gondar, and parts of northern Shoa affected by drought.

May — 5 million people affected by drought conditions Ethiopian government appeals to international community for assistance.
Kerempt rains inadequate and irregular in northern regions - 30 per cent of normal on eastern escarpment and lowlands of Tigre, reducing crop yields and culling livestock.

1981 — Belg rains poor.

March — RRC estimates 12.5 per cent of population affected by drought.
500 per cent of all livestock owned by pastoralists in eastern lowlands of Tigre perished.
40,000 Tigreans already migrated from drought-stricken central highlands to more fertile western regions.

May — 1,850,000 people affected by drought in the northern provinces of Eritrea, Tigre, Wollo and Gondar.
Kerempt rains inadequate and irregular, in many areas crops destroyed by pests. In some areas hailstorms destroyed standing crops late in Kerempt season.
Drought spreads to southern provinces of Sidamo and Gemu Goffa, and south-eastern provinces of Hararghe and Bale.

1982 — World Food Programme put 1982-1983 grain deficit at 250,000 tons.
Belg rains poor, failing completely in many areas. Many northern areas experiencing food shortage.
In Tigre and Eritrea harvests poor for fifth or sixth season in succession.

April — RRC estimate 5,494,100 people facing food shortage (3,058,500 drought-affected and 1,651,000 war displaced people).
For the affected population of the four pro-

vinces of Eritrea, Tigre, Wollo and Gondar, Hancock gives a combined figure of 2,270,000 for 1983 (Hancock, 1985:76).

Joint UN appeal (UNDRO, WFP, UNICEF, WHO) for relief assistance for people from 13 provinces - limited response.
European Parliament votes to proceed with emergency relief programme, satisfied aid being used 'correctly and efficiently'.

May — Town population of Korem swells to 45,000.
USAID approves CRS request for 838 tons of food - after 5 months' delay.

July — 3,400,000 affected by drought in Eritrea, Tigre, Gondar and Wollo (Hancock, 1985:76).
Catholic Relief Services request 4,500 tons of emergency food aid from USAID to expand Makelle programme - granted within 9 days.
Town population of Korem swells to 102,000.
Kerempt rains down to about half of normal across country - in many areas no rain at all.

September — Save the Children Fund reopens feeding centre in Korem TPLF pledges safe passage for any civilian relief aid into rebel areas.

October — Catholic Relief Services submits request to USAID for 16,000 tons of food aid to feed 35,000 families and 14,000 destitutes in Tigre and Eritrea.

November — Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner meets British Aid Minister, Timothy Raison, in London. British alleges misuse of aid.
Catholic Relief Services predicts 90 per cent crop failure in Tigre.

late-1983 — 400 Tigreans a day crossing into Sudan.
REST claims only 5,093 tons of food aid received from aid agencies for whole of 1983 - sufficient for only 4 per cent of needs.
Claims death toll for 1983 to be 17,924.

December — 2,000 children on emergency feeding in Korem.
Number of relief centres increased to 120.

BACKGROUND NOTES

In the northern parts of the country the pattern of decreasing rains and cop failures began in 1979. Indicators of impending famine were signalled in Tigre in early 1981, with evidence of large-scale population movements and livestock culling reported. By late 1982 early 1983 the cumulative effects of food shortages were visible over larger parts of the country as thousands of people began drifting towards the towns and main roads in search of food. By the end of 1983 thousands of people had died and hundreds of thousands more had become displaced.

Warnings of famine conditions and impending food crisis were issued throughout 1980-83 by UN agencies and the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC). An UNDRO evaluation mission visited Ethiopia in 1980 and again in 1982. The UN General Assembly responded to the findings of both missions with appeals for increased assistance to Ethiopia. The FAO Global Information and Early Warning System gave reports on crop shortages in January, April and June 1983, when it reported widespread famine conditions in Tigre, Eritrea, Wollo and Gondar. Several reports detailing the country's food requirements were prepared by the RRC and submitted to regular donor meetings attended by representatives of the international and domestic donor community. In March 1983 Oxfam began

issuing bulletins on the developing situation, and in mid-1983 a series of articles on the famine in Ethiopia appeared in the Washington Post.

International donors' response

The impact of these reports on the international donor community remained minimal throughout. The major western donor governments' response was meagre and was closely bound up with the political wranglings of east-west relations, and budgetary considerations.

All US and UK economic aid to Ethiopia stopped in 1977 as a result of the country's human rights record, and the failure of the government to compensate expulsed US and UK multinational concerns. From 1982 restrictions were placed on US emergency food aid to Ethiopia, under TITLE II of the 'Food for Peace' programme, when USAID refused to channel food through the Government's Relief and Rehabilitation Commission. Although Title II food aid continued to be dispensed through US supported relief agencies operating in the country - the major dispenser being the Catholic Relief Services - contributions were severely cut in 1981 and 1982 (i.e. 43,000 tons in 1980, 24,000 tons in 1981, and 6,000 tons in 1982)[1] and by October 1983 Ethiopia was to be phased out of the programme completely.

USAID's inflexibility on this policy was sharply reflected in the extraordinary delays in granting requests for very minimal amounts of emergency food aid submitted by the CRS in December 1982 and October 1983. Requests which would normally receive approval within 3 weeks, were delayed for 5 months and 9 months respectively. The immediate granting of 4,500 tons of food aid, requested by CRS in July 1983, was a response to media reporting of the famine conditions in Ethiopia at that time and did not reflect humanitarian considerations or any change in policy. Total US extra emergency food aid for 1983 amounted to only 5,438 tons.

The reduction of relief aid under Title II of PL480 was closely bound up with US budgetary considerations, and was part of the Reagan Administration's overall policy on food aid to Africa. The politicization of food aid to Ethiopia was, however, clearly born out in the report of an investigation of USAID's response to CRS requests undertaken by the General Accounting Office in 1985.

In its conclusion the report stated that 'the United States knew that a potentially serious food shortage situation existed in the northern provinces of Ethiopia in late 1982'. The 'initial US response was delayed because of strained relations between the two governments and several policy and administrative concerns related to the provisions of relief aid to Ethiopia.[2] The latter

refer to allegations of aid misappropriations which re-surfaced throughout 1982 and 1983.

Ethiopia's largest aid contribution is the EEC. The EEC makes no attempt to conceal the fact that economic policies override humanitarian considerations. In accordance with policy, the bulk of EEC aid pledged for 1982-1983 took the form of development grants and was tied to on-going food for work projects. The only extra relief aid contributed in 1982 appears to have been the rather limited donations made through the Red Cross Society. These included, 8,000 tons of food and a consignment of £150,000 worth of French beans, topped up with a cash grant of £1.2m.[3]

The response from Britain, openly hostile to the Soviet-backed regime, was completely negative, and there is no record of any food aid contributions from the Soviet bloc countries during this period.

According to a report in Africa Contemporary Record (Vol. XVI, 1983-84: 142), the total relief aid for 1983 was in excess of $62.4m by the end of the third-quarter. An estimated $2.8m of additional aid was perceived to be the minimum requirement for the final quarter if the worst immediate problems were to be alleviated.

Government Response

Other than appealing for international assistance, there appears to have been no positive response at all from the Ethiopian government. Immediate political concerns continued to take precedence over the plight of the hungry masses and the long-term consequences for recovery of delayed action. No specific policies were adopted to mitigate the consequences of drought and food shortages, and no provisions, financial or material, appear to have been made to assist the functioning capacity of the RRC. As evidenced by the large-scale distress migration throughout 1983 peasants were left to exhaust their meagre resources, became totally dependent on food handouts, and ultimately, rehabilitation assistance.

In early 1983 the government claimed that only 1 million of the total population in need were accessible, and appealed for new vehicles and help with the rehabilitation of existing ones. There is no doubt that relief efforts were constrained by limited transport resources. Of the 300 trucks available to the RRC, 170 of them were inoperational.[4] The government's failure to implement policies to ease those constraints affirms that priorities were directed elsewhere. Measures to ensure the provisions of commercial vehicles to the RRC were not undertaken and no army vehicles or transport

aircraft were redeployed from the war effort to the relief effort.

In the conflict areas government actions actively exacerbated the situation. Continued, and at times the intensification of, hostilities destroyed much needed crops, deprived people of access to markets, and caused widespread dislocation.

The situation was aggravated by the lack of food aid entering the rebel areas from the government side. In Tigre and Eritrea, up to 85 per cent of the countryside is under the control and administration of the TPLF and the EPLF respectively. The majority of the drought victims in these provinces were located in the rebel areas and beyond the reach of the central Ethiopian government. However, the bulk of food aid donations throughout 1983 were channelled through voluntary agencies operating in the government areas.[5]

Response To Drought In The Guerilla Controlled Areas of Tigre and Eritrea

In sharp contrast to the inaction of the central Ethiopia government, measures to mitigate the consequences of drought were implemented by both the TPLF and EPLF, together with their respective relief organisations.

These measures took the form of specific but contrasting assistance programmes.

In Tigre, REST's programme became the organized mobilization of large-scale population movements from the drought-belt to the western surplus producing areas. In agreement reached with the local population, migrants were to be productively integrated. The policy of productive integration was essentially to keep the migrants non-dependent. Migrants were accepted on a 'family for family' basis and were expected to work in exchange for food. Participation in the local economy was also encouraged, with trading activities facilitated through the provision of revolving credit funds.

To facilitate these large-scale movements, REST established transit camps all along the migration route. Between October 1982 and Spring 1983, 400,000 people migrated from the drought-stricken central highlands to western areas under REST's auspices. According to REST 70 per cent of the migrants were, in accordance with policy, productively integrated. The rest continued moving westward into Sudan.[6]

REST's policy, it was claimed, was prompted by their own lack of resources and the logistical constraints of transporting food from Sudan to the central highlands - a journey that could take up to one month.

In contrast, ERA's policy was precisely to prevent such large-scale movements through the provision of relief at the local level. ERA maintained that massive displacement would only prolong the process of recovery and rehabilitation in the drought areas.

Both the TPLF and EPLF gave their support to the relief efforts. Assistance was provided in the form of security, trucks, the transportation of relief goods, paramedical personnel, and the provision of grain from their respective agricultural regions.

Continued government offensives, and the unwillingness on the part of the government to negotiate a truce to enable food aid to enter the rebel areas from the government side, imposed severe constraints on relief efforts. Resources and transport capacity were very limited, and the logistics of bringing food overland from Port Sudan extremely difficult. The TPLF claims that the kidnapping of the SCF team in April 1983 was an attempt to bring the plight of the starving in the rebel areas to the attention of the donor community. However, there is no evidence of any private agencies setting-up in these areas subsequent to these actions. Again, the TPLF's offer of 'safe passage' in late 1983 drew a negative response.

There is no information on the amount or sources of food aid channelled through ERA during this period. According to REST, the amount of external aid received during 1983 met only 4 per cent of the populations needs.[7]

WFP/FAO Underestimates gravity of situation and overestimates food stocks available for distribution in famine areas: December 1983-September 1984.

1984

February — Belg rains fail completely in northern drought-affected regions. Joint FAO/WFP mission assesses food needs and logistical constraints.
5,000 children registered with SCF in Korem.

March — Oxfam estimates 8,000 starvation deaths in Tigre since October 1983. A further 6,000 children on emergency feeding in Korem.
Menguistu visits Moscow.
RRC calculates 900,000 tons of emergency grain needed for 1984 for 5.2m people. Appeals for only 450,000 and requests $50m for help with transport.

April — 854 dies in Korem relief centre during the month.

May — USAID approves 8,000 tons of grain after 7 months delay.
Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner meets British Foreign Office

Minister - minimal response.

European community responds to March appeal for 115,000 tons of grain by converting 18,000 tons of project aid to emergency relief.

RRC appeals for 26,000 tons of emergency food aid through World Food Programme.

mid-1984 REST estimates further 520,000 people have migrated from drought-belt to western regions, 90 per cent productively integrated. Further 54,000 migrants in 13 reception centres in Shire and Walkeit district.

REST estimates only 15 per cent of drought victims can be reached through government channels. Aid distributed in ratio of 3 to 1 in favour of government controlled areas.

June Joint FAO/WFP mission report published. Fails to endorse RRC March estimates. Appeals for 125,000 tons of emergency food aid for 1984.

8,000 children on emergency feeding in Korem.

RRC grain stock down to 8,000 tons.

UN World Food Conference held in Addis Ababa.

July USAID approves 8,000 tons of emergency food aid after 9 months delay.

ERA Spokesman in Khartoum claims externally supplied food aid meeting only 12 per cent of

needs.

RRC distributes last of grain.

August — T.V. transmitter installed in Makelle in time for 10th Anniversary celebrations.

400 die in Korem feeding centre during the month.

FAO estimates food gap to be only 50,000 tons of grain pledged since March appeal only 34,000 tons have arrived.

Kerempt rains cease - a month earlier than normal.

September — 40 a day dying in Korem.

Inauguration of Workers' Party of Ethiopia.

Celebration of 10th Anniversary of Ethiopian Revolution.

EEC pledge of 18,000 tons of grain arrive.

18 private agencies in Addis Ababa appeal to international donor community for emergency food aid.

Oxfam announces 10,000 tons of grain shipment to Ethiopia.

late-1984 — EPLF and TPLF publicly call for a truce to allow food aid to reach the starving. EPLF invites governments and donor agencies to

inspect and supply drought affected areas under its control.

EPLF estimates out of population of between 1.5m and 2m 350,000 acutely affected (60,000 in displaced persons camps and 8,000 prisoners of war)

Oxfam estimates 1.4m severely affected in Tigre.

BACKGROUND NOTES

As conditions deteriorated throughout 1984, the immediate needs of the starving were pushed further into the background as logistical concerns were added to the political in the ranking of priorities.

Logistical Concerns

In February/March, two assessments were made of the country's food requirements for 1984-85, one by the RRC, and the other by a visiting FAO/WFP mission. The brief of the latter was to assess 'the food supply situation and the logistics problems related to the mobilization of food within the country'. The conclusions of both assessments were heavily weighted by logistical factors and have been subject to a great deal of criticism (in

retrospect) for the negative impact they were to have on the course of the famine throughout 1984.

In its March report, the RRC calculated that 912,000 tons of emergency grain were needed if starvation was to be averted in 1984. It then stated that handling such an amount would be difficult with its limited resources. The full requirement figures was reduced by half, and the RRC launched its appeal for only 456,000 tons. This figure was then cut yet again by the FAO mission by almost three-quarters. Thus, as Gill (1986:44) puts it; 'after two bureaucracies had had their say, national needs of 900,000 tons emerged as a UN-backed appeal for 125,000 tons'.

The missions conclusion were heavily weighted by logistical constraints, in particular the capacity of the Ethiopian ports to receive and clear incoming grain. The mission reckoned that the total capacity of both Assab and Massawa was no more than 1,000 tons a day (a significant underestimation as it turned out) giving an annual import capacity of 365,000 tons. Then, by some unexplained calculation, it was concluded that the country's distribution capacity was limited to 125,000 tons.

The most damaging aspect of the mission's report was that it governed the outlook of UN headquarters and field

staff throughout most of 1984. An attempt by Dr. Kenneth King, an Addis-based UNDP official, to convince the mission that the logistical problems could be overcome, appears to have fallen on deaf ears. The country's distribution capacity remained an immutable 125,000 tons.

A further serious error made by the FAO/WFP during early 1984 was to overestimate the stocks available for distribution in the famine areas. In its report on food aid deliveries to Africa, published in March, the WFP estimated Ethiopia's food requirements for 1984 to be 300,000 tons. It then stated that 176,000 tons of food had already been pledged, that the RRC held 45,000 tons, and that the Ethiopian AMC had 240,000 tons in reserve. Implicit in the report, therefore, was the notion that there was no need for further food aid.

However, the report failed to make two important distinctions. Firstly, no distinction was made between normal national requirements and emergency reserves in its treatment of the status of AMC stocks. The report did note that the government lacked the budgetary capacity to purchase the grain and that financial support would be necessary. However, exactly how the starving and impoverished masses were to gain access to this grain was not dealt with at all - unless it was assumed that once in government hands, the grain would be distributed gratis! Secondly, no distinction was made between project

and relief aid - in fact of the 176,000 tons pledge, only 7,810 tons were intended for emergency use.[8]

Again the most damaging aspect of the report was the influence it was to have on the donor community and the resident UN and NGO field staff. The report was given greater credence than the more alarming reports presented by the RRC. The latter allegedly having undermined its own credibility by the apparently arbitrary reduction of its own requirements. As a result, the view that food supplies, domestically based in the pipeline, were sufficient for requirements, persisted for several months.

By June the food stocks available to the RRC for distribution in the famine areas was down to 8,000 tons. This was depleted completely by the end of July early August. The FAO continued to maintain there was sufficient grain in the country or in the pipeline. In July the FAO reported that 250,000 tons had been received or was in the pipeline. On 6 August the RRC claimed that of 87,000 tons of grain pledged since its March appeal only 34,000 tons had been delivered. During the same month the WFP claimed that the gap between requirements and commitments was only 50,000 tons. In September the only grain available for distribution in the famine areas was 18,000 tons pledged by the EEC in May in response to the Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner's follow up to

his March appeal.[9] The amount fell far short of the initial request for 115,000 tons of grain, and was not in fact extra aid. The EEC simply agreed to allow 18,000 tons of already pledged project aid to be used for relief.

It is generally agreed that the NGOs operating in the country during this period were more responsive and more flexible than the governments of the major donor countries. However, their response to the developing crisis was still slow. It was not until September when the discrepancies between the FAO/WFP pronouncements and the actual food situation were patently visible that any coordinated initiative was undertaken. In early September, 18 private organizations linked to the Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA) dispatched a telex to all western donors, governments and UN agencies, provided an appraisal of the situation and demanded 'immediate and extraordinary action'.

A further significant initiative was undertaken by Oxfam in late August early September. Oxfam attempted to organize a 10,000-20,000 ton grain shipment. This was in fact extraordinary action on the part of the organization, its main role in Ethiopia being one of development not relief. The initiative was prompted partly in response to the gravity of the situation in the country, and partly to shame western governments into

Tigre and Eritrea

The information available on developments in the rebel areas during this period is limited. Aid was being channelled through the relief organization War on Want and Christian Aid (a British charity). There is no information on other sources. However, in July, an ERA spokesman in Khartoum claimed that the amount of externally received aid up to that point, had met only 12 per cent of needs. According to one report, ERA's monthly requirements were 20,000 tons of grain but only 2,000 tons a month were available for distribution.[11] Relief efforts were exacerbated by the deteriorating situation in Sudan. As Sudanese grain prices escalated ERA and REST were having to pay £S90 per kilo of sorghum.

Media coverage of famine and international relief efforts: Oct. 1984 -Dec. 1985.

1984

October

October 3rd, Ethiopian government declares drought a priority.

Establishes National Committee for Relief and Rehabilitation.

RRC estimates 7,740,000 threatened with food shortages, 1.5m tons of grain, 94,000 tons of supplementary food and 27,000 tons of oil required for next 12 months.

Appeals for 624,310 tons. 100 a day dying in Korem relief centre.

1,000 a day dying in northern provinces.

60,000 tons of grain arrives at Port Assab.

Ethiopian government announces plans to resettle up to 1,500,000 people from drought affected regions of Wollo, Tigre, and Shoa.

Press restrictions lifted.

British television teams allowed to travel to famine areas.

October 23rd, BBC main evening news shows film of famine in Ethiopia.

October 25th, Thames Television transmits documentary film 'Bitter Harvest'.

War on Want proposes establishment of

international committee to ensure aid reaches famine victims in rebel areas.

November UN establishes Office of Emergency Operations in Ethiopia (OEOE).

20 transport planes and 20 helicopters provided by donor governments.

USAID lifts restrictions on relief aid to RRC.

35,000 in Korem relief centre.

110,000 people in Korem registered with RRC for emergency relief.

FAO crop assessment mission estimates grain deficit for 1984-1985 to between 1.7m and 2m tons.

Ethiopian government rejects War on Want's initiative.

2,000 tons of grain arrives at Port Sudan for distribution in EPLF controlled areas - most of it from British farmers. Send a Ton to Africa campaign War on Want delivers 1,000 tons for distribution by ERA, further 4,000 tons on its way. Christian Aid contributes £650,000 worth of aid, mostly in the form of cash grants, to ERA and REST.

ERA spokesman visits United States. Appeals for emergency food aid for 1.5m famine victims, and calls for pressure on Ethiopian government for truce to allow food into rebel

areas.

20,000 Eritreans crossed into Sudan during October-November.

December UN estimates 500,000 tons of grain pledged

RRC receives 5,651 tons of the 181,486 tons of grain and 15,369 tons of supplementary food pledged in October.

December 18, Janssen submits assessment report to donor meeting in New York. Appeals for 1.2m tons of food aid for 7.7m famine victims - appeal endorsed.

30,000 tons of food distributed during the month.

1,500 Tigreans die a day.

1,500 Tigreans crossing into Sudan daily, 80,000 have crossed border since October.

UNHCR Official, Poul Hertling claims more than 210,000 Ethiopian refugees entered Sudan during 1984.

US Select Committee on Hunger put death toll for 1984 at 300,00. Gill and King give figure of 1m. (Gill, 198?, King, 1985).

1985

January Cholera outbreak in Korem.

Total amount of grain delivered since October

put at 407,689 tons.

Janssen meets with Menguistu to discuss possibility of distributing aid to rebel areas - negative response.

Ethiopian government impounds Australian relief vessel carrying 6,000 tons of wheat, and drilling rig destined for Eritrea and Tigre.

February RRC report claims emergency relief aid reaching only 22 per cent of population of Tigre, most of recipients in areas of Makelle.

March US Officials in Khartoum discuss possibility of providing food to ERA and REST via Sudan.

REST distributing 1,500 tons of grain a month.

Aid from voluntary agencies including $7.25m to finance grain purchase, and 60 trucks.

Total of above assistance only meeting 5 per cent of REST's needs.

REST estimates 65,000 on the road - 1m stayed behind, too weak to move. 66,000 Eritrean refugees in Wad Shenife camp, Sudan. Within a few months figures rose to 140,000.

6,000 Ethiopians die a day.

April 45,000 tons of grain distributed to 3.2 million people.

US government estimates between 2 and 4 thousand Ethiopians entering Sudan daily.

ICRC alleges deliberate withholding of aid from rebel areas.

Forced evacuation of refugees from Ibenat relief camp.

REST organizes repatriation of refugees from Sudan.

May — 100,000 tons of grain backed up at Port Assab.

Janssen meets with Menguistu to discuss transport problems.

Government claims food aid reaching 7 million.

US Officials claim 90 per cent of relief reaching those for whom it was intended.

70,000 Tigrean refugees returned home, 57,000 under REST's auspices.

June — Janssen meets with donors; set distribution target at 70,000 tons.

Mid-1985 — Number of Tigrean refugees in camp south of Wadi Kowli, Sudan rose to over 100,000, up to 22,000 in March.

August — Janssen reports food aid reaching 80 per cent of famine victims in Tigre and 70 per cent of famine victims in Eritrea.

US calls for inquiry to allegations of deliberate withholding of food from rebel areas.

US returns to February initiative for food corridor from Sudan to rebel areas.

USAID supplies 150 10-ton trucks - 75 each to ERA and REST.

55,000 tons of USAID grain stockpiled in Port Sudan for distribution by ERA and REST.

September 82,000 tons of grain distributed during the month.

Janssen estimates aid reaching 7m people.

REST estimates 3.8m affected by drought.

October 76,000 tons of grain distributed during month.

70,000 still receiving aid at 73 relief camps throughout country.

Death rate falls to 2,000 a day.

REST estimates 200,000 Tigreans migrated to Sudan during past 12 months. 400-700 Eritreans crossing into Sudan daily - 20,000-30,000 have crossed since August.

November 64,000 tons of grain distributed during month.

Supplementary feeding reaches 30,000.

December 64,000 tons of grain distributed during the month.

RRC estimates 5,800,000 will need food aid in 1986 (1,700,000 in Tigre and Eritrea, and 2,100,000 in Central Shoa and Wollo).

FAO estimates food aid requirements for 1985-1986 to be 900,000 tons.

Janssen estimates 600,000 tons of food aid required for 1986.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Global media coverage of the Ethiopian famine in late October, prompted an unprecedented public response. A series of fund raising campaigns were initiated and continued unabated throughout most of 1985 (e.g. Band Aid, Live Aid, Sports Aid, to name but a few). Within a few months of the broadcast, major NGOs were reporting record breaking contributions. As public pressure was brought to bear, the major western donor governments were finally galvanized into action.

By the first week in November 20 aircraft and 30 helicopters, supplied by 7 donor (UK, USA, USSR, FRG, GDR, Italy and Libya), were involved in airlifting supplies. During October-December food aid pledged to the RRC rose to 181,486 tons. Contributions from the Soviet bloc countries in mid-November included 30,000

tons of grain and transport aircrafts. In mid-December the UN reported that 500,000 tons of grain had been pledged. For the period December 1984-December 1985 1.2m tons of grain had been pledged.[12] In November 1984, US restrictions on food aid to the RRC were lifted, with 50,000 tons of grain pledged for 1984-1985. The total US contribution to the relief effort for 1984-1985 was 450,000 tons, approximately one-third of the total pledged. However, the US, and in particular Britain, were subjected to a good deal of criticism. The US for falling short of its usual aid policy of 50 per cent, and Britain for utilising funds designated for development purposes. The only additional expenditure sanctioned by the British government throughout the whole emergency was the Ministry of Defence contribution of £12m towards the airlift operation.

In early 1985 the Ethiopian government announced a package of austerity measures to help the relief effort. These included, a ban on luxury imports, petrol rationing, and a 'famine levy': all Ethiopians were to contribute one month's pay, and peasants were each to give 100kg of grain.

The Relief Operation[13]

In early November 1984, the UN, belatedly, took the lead. On 6 November, UN veteran, Kurt Janssen, was appointed to

head a newly established office for Emergency Operations in Ethiopia (OEOE). Janssen's brief was to coordinate the system of resource mobilization. At the practical level, this meant ensuring the flow of information among donors, the RRC, and NGOs, and to facilitate the coordination of activities. As a first initiative, Janssen acquired the agreement of the normally competitive Geneva-based and New York-based UN agencies to make Addis Ababa the focal point for fund raising operations.

Janssen calculated Ethiopia's food requirements for December 1984-December 1985 to be 1.2m tons of grain for an affected population of 7.7m (subsequently increased to 7.9m). This figure fell far short of the RRC estimate (October 1984) of 1.5m tons and the FAO estimate (November 1984) of between 1.7m and 2m tons. Here again logistics were influential in the unwillingness to endorse the higher requirement estimates. This time it was not port capacity (off-take from Assab reached 3,000 and at times 4,000 tons a day during 1985), but rather the limited internal transport resources. However, an added dimension was donor attitudes: 'To ask for more than could be used would have resulted in an outcry by donors...' (Janssen, 1987: 5) The appeal was endorsed at a donor meeting on 18 December 1985, the total amount pledged for the 1984-1985 period was 1,273,000 tons. By

June 1985, 801,000 tons had been delivered. By October 1985, 975,000 were received.

According to Janssen the major constraint on the relief effort was not food availability, but distribution (Janssen's concept of distribution is the narrows one of quantity. His concern throughout is the amount of food being distributed and the number of beneficiaries. There is no critical discussion of the distribution system). Janssen identifies two main constraining factors: limited transport resources and the donors' tendency towards earmarking their donations.

With regard to transport, the difficulty was one of clearing the grain from the ports. Ships were docked for up to 9 days throughout most of the year. In May, congestion in the port of Assab, the main delivery point, reached 101,000 tons. Balancing the off-loading capacity of Assab would have required deploying 150 long-haul tons trucks per day. This figure was reached only infrequently despite constant pressure on the minister of transport. During the same month, after meeting with Janssen, Mengistu agreed to supply extra vehicles. However, Janssen does not state the quantity, or even if the agreement was kept.

The issue of increasing the off-take out of Assab continued to be a major cause of friction between donors

and the Ethiopian government throughout 1985. In June it was estimated that the amount of emergency food aid in the pipeline exceeded the projected distribution capacity for the next 7 months by about 270,000 tons[114]. Although it was acknowledged that the amount of food in the pipeline was not sufficient to meet Ethiopia's needs, it was agreed to postpone any further shipments until a concomitant increase in distribution capacity was provided by either the government or donors.

The second major constraining factor, the system of earmarking, posed several problems. The tendency of the major donors was to earmark given agencies and specific regions. At the beginning of the emergency the NGO's share of food distribution was small but grew steadily, and reached an average of 65 per cent by the last quarter of 1985. By December 1985 the NGO's share had reached 67 per cent. However, with the exception of the International Committee of the Red Cross and CARE, both self-sufficient in trucks, the NGOs, in accepting responsibility for the distribution of grain, had failed to assure the provision of transport from their donors. Distribution was impeded until donors could be persuaded to provide trucks and this took considerable time. This problem was compounded by the lack of standardization of the imported trucks, and many were unsuitable. By the end of 1985 early 1986 the number of truck provided by donors was just over 1,000.

In extending the system of earmarking to specific regions, some areas were receiving a greater proportion of the food available. This was a particular problem in those areas serviced by the RRC. By mid-1985 the amount of food available to the RRC for distribution, was averaging 24,000 tons a month.[15] Wollo province suffered particularly from this system. In mid-1985 the food requirements of the region were estimated to be 35,000 tons a month. Of the available for distribution by RRC, Wollo received 9,000 tons a month, its supplies for the last quarter of 1985 for Wollo.

A further, for Janssen less serious, constraint was the poor road system making access into the interior 'impossible'. Distribution had to take place along the main roads. For many the journey to the distribution points took several days. However, this was not a problem for Janssen as 'Ethiopian peasants have traditionally moved long distances in search of food during drought.... and for them it was not difficult to understand that they had to do this again.[16] Following this logic, I suppose those too weak to make the journey had to starve to death. At the peak of the operation, the number of distribution points reached 257. Rations were distributed on a monthly basis on a predetermined day which was communicated to the peasant associations. In most areas the peasant associations were responsible for assessing the need for relief aid.

Airlifting was a further component of the distribution effort. The airlift operation was initiated in November 1984. By the end of 1984, 27 transport planes and 24 helicopters had been provided by the donor community. Throughout 1985, 76 aircrafts were employed in the relief operations and transported up to 15 per cent of the total food distributed. The planes flew mainly from Assab and Asmara to airstrips in Tigre and Wollo, and on a lesser scale to Gondar, and Hararghe. In February, an air drop was initiated to transport food to less accessible areas. This operation was financed by donor governments with costs shared by the military and civilian budgets.

In planning the food distribution programme Janssen made some dangerous assumptions. It was concluded that distribution did not have to reach 'full speed' during the months of December and January. The main 1984 harvest had been 'good' in two surplus producing regions which meant that some 'food was available on the market but at a much price'. Added to which, 'the peasants had set aside small quantities from earlier harvests, a traditional practice...'[17] The cumulative effects of drought and the precise mechanisms via which the starving and impoverished masses were to gain access to the market did not enter into the calculations. Thus, the distribution of 35,000 tons of food aid a month during the period December-March was considered a 'satisfactory start', even though the number of beneficiaries, 3.2m

amounted to less than half of the total affected population of 7.7m. Janssen calculated the critical period would come in March-April, before the small harvest, but the real crunch would come in September-October. Thus, in April distribution increased to 45,000 tons a month. In September, the amount of food distributed reached a peak of 82,000 tons. In October, food distribution dropped to 76,000 tons and in November and December 'when the new harvest was beginning to have its effect', distribution decreased to an average of 64,j000 tons a month.

The original distribution target had been 100,000 tons a month but, owing to internal transport problems, this had proved 'impossible to reach'. In June 1985, it was decided, by the OEOE and the major donors, to set the distribution target at 70,000 tons a month. It was calculated that 7m people were receiving food aid by mid-1985. According to Janssen the fact that the targeted figure of 7.9m was not reached did not mean that the rest starved. The 'extended family system', 'traditional in Ethiopia', would ensure that the food distributed 'would be shared'.

The overall relief effort was perceived by Janssen to be a success. The criteria being: 'the aim of the aid effort was to save lives and, as was evident by the regular return of registered recipients to distribution

points, food distribution kept the people alive'.[18] There is no discussion on those too weak to make the distribution points, the thousands of refugees, and those excluded from access to food aid for political reasons.

In October 1984, the government announced its controversial policy to resettle up to 1,500,000 people from the drought affected regions of Wollo, Tigre, and northern Shoa, to areas in Wollega, Illubabor, Gojjam and Kaffa in the south-west of the country. The government justified this action on the grounds that it was the only viable long-term solution to the ecological degradation overtaking the drought-prone areas. For many this action was regarded as an opportunistic move on the part of the government to depopulate these provinces for political and military reasons, rather than any positive response to the developing crisis. The implementation of scheme began in November. The alleged forced, rather than voluntary, nature of the programme, together with the conditions under which the migrants (deportees) were transported to the resettlement areas, was denounced by western governments and the media for being appalling and inhumane. The peasants, many of them already in a weakened state, were crowded into unpressurised Soviet planes and trucks for long periods at a time. For those travelling by road the journey took several days. Many reportedly never made it. Insufficient preparations had been made at the resettlement sites and in most areas

basic services were none existent or very poor. By January 1986 up to 600,000 people had already been resettled. In terms of relief effort, the resettlement scheme generated a great deal of controversy amongst the donor community. The US, Britain and West Germany, were particularly hostile to the scheme and for several months maintained an embargo on grain supplies to the resettlement areas. This policy was relaxed in late 1985 but the amount of food aid entering the resettlement areas remained minimal.

Information on rehabilitation is very limited. Evacuation of the major relief camps began in August 1985. However, in April, between 32,000 and 38,000 people were forcibly evacuated, reportedly by the regional political cadres, from Ibenat (Gondar) relief camp without the provision of any relief supplies, seeds, and other agricultural inputs. When the official returnee programme was initiated, pro-visions were given. However, given the time lags and delays in deliveries, agricultural inputs arrived in greater quantities only in the second half of the year. Often too late for the planting season.

Aid to Tigre and Eritrea

Information on the amount and sources of aid channelled through ERA and REST throughout the relief operation is

minimal. However, food aid and financial support in limited amounts was provided by private agencies and church organisations from contributions received in response to the media coverage of the famine. Most of the £620,000 raised by War on Want was channelled through ERA and REST in the form of food aid. One thousand tons of grain arrived at Port Sudan in November 1984, with a further 4,000 tons in transit. In mid-November, 2,000 tons of grain for use by ERA was delivered. Most of this was donated by the British farmers' Send a Ton to Africa campaign. During the same month, Christian Aid donated £650,000 of the £1m raised to ERA and REST. This was mostly in the form of cash grants.[19]

During late 1984 and early 1985, financial and material aid was received by REST from a consortia of voluntary agencies. There included, the US backed Mercy Corps International, and Lutheran World Relief. The Tigrean Transport Programme (TTP), made up of mostly Benelux and Scandinavian NGOs, and the Emergency Relief Desk, funded by european church agencies and Canadian NGOs. By March 1985, the total amount of aid provided via these agencies included, 60 trucks and $7.2m for food purchases. During this period REST was distributing 1,500 tons of grain a month, sufficient for only 5 per cent of the populations needs.[20]

According to one report (Keleman, 1985:281), the total US allocation to relief agencies working on the government side for the period October 1984-November 1985 was $210m. The amount US funding to agencies providing aid to guerilla areas for the same period was $20m. The allocation of British famine relief was in the ratio of 4 to 1.

There is no doubt that the major western donor governments put their main support behind efforts to reach drought victims in Tigre and Eritrea from the government side. It was reported that much of the grain donated by the US, and other governments, was earmarked for these provinces, but channelled through agencies working on the government side. The main distributing agencies were International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). However, allegations that food aid was not reaching, or being deliberately withheld from, the drought victims in the rebel area resurfaced throughout the course of the famine.

In October 1984, War on Want responded to these allegations with a proposal for the establishment of an international commission to ensure the free and safe passage of relief into the rebel areas. The proposal received the support of 52 voluntary agencies and ex German Chancellor Willi Brandt agreed to monitor safe

passage arrangements. The initiative met with negative response from the Ethiopian government. In November 1984 an ERA representative visited the US to appeal for extra emergency aid for the estimated 1.5m drought victims, and called on government to exert pressure on the Ethiopian government to negotiate a truce. Again, in January 1985, Janssen proposed to Menguistu that convoys of food be allowed to enter the rebel areas - food convoys travelled no further than Makelle. The responsibility for the convoys was to be undertaken by Janssen himself of the ICRC. The initiative was again rejected by the government.

In February 1985, the possibility of a 'food corridor' from Sudan into the rebel areas was discussed by US officials based in Khartoum and visiting US Vice President Bush - the outcome was, however, limited. During the same month a report issued by the RRC stated that food aid was reaching only 32 per cent of the drought victims in Tigre and that the main recipients were in the area of Makelle.[21]

In May 1985 the deliberate withholding of food from the needy in the rebel areas was alleged by ICRC. Government abuse of food aid for conscription purposes was also reported. According to the EPLF, some 20,000 drought victims were conscripted in 1984.

However, subsequent inquires into these allegations continued to maintain that food aid was reaching those for whom it was intended. In August, Janssen reported that of the drought victims in Tigre and Eritrea, 80 per cent and 70 per cent respectively were receiving food aid. According to Janssen's calculations, a total of 1,120,000 people out of an estimated 1.5m needing food aid were reached in Tigre. 65 per cent of the relief food was being distributed by NGOs, mainly ICRC and the Catholic Secretariat. In Eritrea the number reached was put a just over 600,000 out of an estimated 827,000. The main distributing agency being the ICRC.

These conclusions were drawn from information supplied by NGOs and food distribution monitors in the government controlled areas. However, the main area of contention between REST and Janssen was the population figures upon which the estimate was based. Janssen, drawing on the government's latest population census, maintained that the total population of Tigre was 2.4m. REST claimed a population of 5m in the TPLF controlled areas, and a drought-affected population of 3.8m. Despite official pronouncements to the effect that aid was reaching those people whom it was intended, in August 1985, the US returned to the original cross-border plan mooted in February. According to one report (African Confidential, Oct, 1985:), 150 10-ton trucks (75 each to ERA and REST) were supplied for cross-border operations. In August

1985, 45,000 tons of USAID grain was stockpiled and awaiting delivery.

An additional channel of, indirect, government aid, was provided through the refugee camps in Sudan. The number of Tigrean and Eritrean migrations into Sudan rose significantly throughout 1985. Information on the actual number of border crossing is not consistent, but it would appear that the larger number of migrations were from Tigre to Wad Kowli camp in eastern Sudan. During October-November 1984, 80,000 Tigreans were reported to have migrated, with an estimated 1,500 continuing to cross daily.[22] In March migrations were occurring at a rate of 10,000 a week.[23] However, according to one source, the number of migrants in Wad Kowli in March was 82,000, by mid-1985 the number had risen to 100,000.[24] By October 1985 REST had estimated that 200,000 Tigreans had entered Sudan since October 1984.[25]

Migrations from Eritrea were in the direction of Wad Sherife camp in eastern Sudan. However, the pattern of migrations, large numbers over short periods, would suggest that possibly an intensification of hostilities rather than drought prompted these movements. During October-November 1984 an estimated 20,000 people migrated.[26] In March 1985, the number of Eritreans in Wad Sherife camp was, according to one report, 66,000 within a 'few months' the number had risen to 140,000 -

thousands were reportedly trucked south to Girba.[27] During the period August-October 1985 between 20,000 and 30,000 crossed into Wad Sherife.[28]

During April and May 1985, the repatriation of Tigrean refugees was implemented by REST. Some 70,000 migrants returned home during the period, of which 57,000 were assisted by REST. Transit camps were established all along the route with no more than a day's distance between each. Only heads of families, or those able to work the land, were repatriated. Families were to be repatriated during the next repatriation programme this policy was adopted to ensure continued productivity and at the same time keep the need for relief food down to a minimum. The repatriation programme was linked to the on-going emergency relief and rehabilitation project in Tigre. Returnees were provided with rehabilitation assistance in the form of seeds, tools and oxen. According to REST the number of people still in need of emergency food aid in 1986 was 2m. 180,000 families were targeted for rehabilitation assistance during 1986.[29]

DEVELOPMENT IN 1986-1987

According to the RRC, an estimated 5,800,000 people were still in need of food aid during 1986-1987, of which 1,700,000 were in the northern provinces of Tigre and Eritrea, (where, reportedly seeds had not been delivered

in time to take advantage of the rains) and 2,100,000 in the two provinces of Shoa and Wollo. The FAO calculated the food requirements for 1986 to be 900,000 tons.[30] The RRC put the requirements at 1.3m.[31] 785,000 tons of grain were pledged for 1986, but owing to delays in the arrival of 1985 pledges there were reportedly, no gaps in provisions. Conditions were said to have improved and relief shelters were phased out.

Michael Priestly, who, in October 1985, replaced Janssen as coordinator of the OEOE, launched, in May an appeal for assistance for 1986, particularly for transport. The belg rains were reported to have been excellent, resulting in good crops where they had been planted. The Ministry of Agriculture, in collaboration with various NGOs is said to have distributed 25,000 tons of seed and 2 million hand tools in time for the main planting season.[32] However, although an improvement on 1985, the amount and distribution of the main rains were unfavourable in many areas, and ceased early in some northern areas.

Throughout 1986 the need for relief persisted. However, with the crisis period over, arguments over allocations resurfaced. According to one report, CRS, faced with the need to continue its food projects, had its allocation of food aid cut by USAID as it reduced its commitment. However, despite an earlier decision to phase out its

operation by the end of 1986, USAID reportedly remained in Ethiopia.[33]

Footnotes to Appendix

1 Gill, 1986, p.54, Penrose, 1987, p.148
2 Gill, ibid, p.60
3 Gill, ibid, p.78
4 Africa Contemporary Record, Annual Survey and Document Vol. XVI 1983-4 p.142
5 Wright, 1984, p.101-105
6 Wright, ibid, Russel, 1984 pp.27-28
7 Wright, ibid
8 Penrose, op.cit. pp.143-147, Gill op.cit. pp.41-51
9 Penrose, ibid, Gill, ibid
10 Penrose, ibid, Gill, ibid
11 Penrose, ibid, pp.153-156
12 Penrose, ibid, pp.153-156, Shepherd, 1983, pp.51-54
13 This section is based mostly on Janssen 1987
14 Janssen, ibid, p.38
15 Janssen, ibid, p.71
16 Janssen, ibid, p.46
17 Janssen, ibid, p.48
18 Janssen, ibid, p.55
19 Firebrace, 1984, Hancock, 1985
20 Africa Confidential, March 1985
21 Keesing's Vol. XXXII, July 1986, p.34471
22 Keesing's Vol. XXXI, February 1985, p.33383
23 Keesing's Vol. XXXII, July 1986, p.34473
24 King, 1986, p.73
25 REST, February 1985
26 Firebrace, 1984
27 King, 1986, p.73
28 Africa Confidential, October 1985
29 REST, February, 1985
30 Keesing's Vol. XXXII, March 1986, p.34211
31 Penrose, 1987 p.158
32 Keesing's Vol. XXXII, March 1986 p.34211
33 Penrose, 1987 p.159

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"	Vol. XXXII, July 1986, p.34471-34473 Ethiopia - Famine and Relief Operations
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