ETHIOPIA--CONTRASTS AND CONTRADICTIONS

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INTRODUCTION

This paper summarizes impressions of Ethiopia gained during a three-week visit during March 1987. Occasionally it also reflects subsequent information obtained from more recent visitors to, and travelers from, the country as well as current news reporting. It is based in large part on a 3 and 1/2 hour illustrated lecture and discussion session at the Georgetown University Intercultural Center, Washington, D.C., on September 10, 1987, sponsored by the Ethiopian Studies Association.

ETHIOPIA 1987--CONTRASTS AND CONTRADICTIONS

ADDIS ABABA

The capital and the central and southern parts of the country were enjoying heavy spring rains during my visit. Expectations then were that there would be a good harvest. At that time there was no food shortage either in the capital or to any significant degree elsewhere in the country, for the nearly $2 billion famine aid received since 1984 had, on the whole, been fairly distributed and had a very positive effect.[1] (So had last year's generally good harvests.) Excellent food could be obtained in public restaurants in Addis Ababa. There was a plentiful supply of fresh vegetables and fruit for sale at stands everywhere in the city. The open market price of the most basic grain, teff, had recently fallen to 70-80 birr per hundredweight; this same price prevailed through much of the country. Difficulties in food distribution arise primarily from inefficiencies in the nationalized distribution system and restrictions on transport of food from one region of the country to another. The government is especially sensitive about coffee, the major export crop. Only one kilogram of coffee can be legally brought into Addis Ababa from coffee-growing regions. Restrictions on transport and trade in food and other basic commodities have given rise to an extensive black market, about which I will have more to say below.

I had last been in Ethiopia in 1984, during March and again in November/December of that year. Early that year the mood of the country seemed subdued and the people intimidated. There was a great deal of regime pressure on the population to prepare for the celebrations of the 10th anniversary of the Revolution and the founding of the Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE) which took place in September. By December, when

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[1] "A myriad of donors, both private and governmental, contributed to the relief effort. The total of donations received by Ethiopia may never be calculated accurately but probably nears $2.0 billion (compared to Ethiopia's annual GNP of under $5.0 billion)." *Final Disaster Report: Ethiopia Drought/Famine*, USAID, Addis Ababa, May 1987, p. 36.

knowledge of the famine had become widespread in the world at large as well as inside the country, people stood much less in awe of the PMGSE[2] and WPE. I found during my most recent visit that there had been little change in attitudes, in spite of the anticipated proclamation of the People's Republic in September of this year.

Among people on the streets as well as among many other elements in Ethiopian society, Americans and Europeans are more popular than ever and Russians more openly disliked and scorned. Among East Europeans only Poles are popular. Cubans seem irrelevant. Local radio and TV are followed with the same skill people apply under Marxist-Leninist regimes everywhere but are not regarded as reliable sources of world news. The most popular source of information is the Voice of America's Amharic service. There is also a good deal of listening to Deutsche Welle in Amharic and to BBC and VOA in English.

Whatever the regime might like to do, it is incapable of cutting the population off from the outer world. Western newspapers and magazines circulate widely, though they are not openly sold. The local press has little content other than political exhortation. Bookstores are almost empty, for there is no internal publishing of any importance and little is being officially imported from abroad. Nevertheless, a surprising amount of written material comes into Ethiopia through many channels. The presence of a large diplomatic community and the large staffs assigned to several UN elements and the Organization of African Unity have prevented hardliners in the regime from getting a handle on the problem of the printed word.

There is continual contact with Ethiopians abroad by telephone and mail. Sound and video cassettes circulate extensively and are publicly sold in private shops throughout the country. Transcripts of VOA broadcasts of declarations of recent high-level defectors such as Goshu Wolde and Dawit Wolde Giorgis are extremely popular and command high prices. Books such as the recent one by former U.S. Charge d'Affaires David Korn[3] are eagerly sought and pass from hand to hand. Many high

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[2]Provisional Military Government of Socialist Ethiopia, the term used until September 12, 1987, when the name of the country was changed to People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE).

[3]David A. Korn, *Ethiopia, the United States and the Soviet Union*, London, Croom Helm, 1986. Distributed in the U.S. by Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale.

party officials have read it. The same is true of the series of articles I published in the London *Encounter* in the summer of 1986.[4]

Relations wth the Soviets

The Ethiopian regime still shows no signs of adjusting to the Gorbachev era--there has been no talk of *glasnost'* and no one has made any promises of *perestroika*. In fact, the regime clings to rigid Marxist-Leninist dogma in face of mounting evidence that some Soviets at least are urging it to be more flexible. There is intense interest in party and government circles as well as among intellectuals and educated young people in what is going on in the USSR and elsewhere in the communist world. Books by Western specialists such as Seweryn Bialer are circulating, and Robert Conquest's *Harvest of Sorrow* is popular both in book and videocassette form. Informed Westerners in Addis Ababa have the impression that the top leadership is disturbed and confused by Gorbachev's reforms. There is little evidence of a warm party-to-party relationship. Curiously enough, Moscow did not send a high-ranking dignitary to the celebrations of the proclamation of the People's Republic--an occasion regarded by Mengistu and his small leadership group as the crowning event of the Ethiopian revolutionary process.

Addis Ababa was full of rumors this spring that Gorbachev had served an ultimatum on Mengistu more or less to this effect: "Improve your relations with your neighbors and persuade them to withdraw support for insurgent movements. Establish internal peace so you can get on with the task of development. The Soviet Union will not keep shipping unlimited quantities of arms for offensives in Eritrea which always end in stalemate, with sizable quantities of the weapons falling into the hands of the insurgents." But as has always been the case with rumors in Ethiopia, there is little consistency. Some Ethiopians, including high party people, will tell you in confidence that they still believe the Russians desire continued tension between Ethiopia and its neighbors so that they can maintain a grip on the country. Perhaps the Ethiopian regime is getting different signals from different elements in the

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[4]Paul B. Henze, "Behind the Ethiopian Famine: Anatomy of a Revolution," *Encounter*, June, July/August, and September/October 1986.

Kremlin. Whatever may actually be happening, the fact remains that this year, as last, there has been no general offensive in Eritrea and, throughout the entire north, government forces seem to be conducting essentially holding operations. There is no evidence that large new shipments of arms have been received. There has been no increase in numbers of Russians in the country and Cuban presence is said to have been further reduced. Neither Cubans nor Russians are much in evidence in Addis Ababa.

Costs of War

Maimed, crippled, and blind young men are a more noteworthy feature of the Addis Ababa street scene than ever before. Some will tell you they were wounded in Eritrea or elsewhere in the regime's campaigns against dissidents and insurgents. Not only the victims, but many other Ethiopians comment on the poor quality of medicine practiced in their armed forces and blame it on the Russians and Cubans. The term "Civil War Medicine" is widely used to characterize--and condemn--crude medical practices in civilian hospitals as well as in the military. The reference is to the level of medicine in the United States at the time of the American Civil War. If anything, Ethiopians tend to exaggerate the technical backwardness of their Soviet "benefactors." No Soviet products other than weaponry are first choice among Ethiopians, and disparaging comments about the poor quality of Soviet military equipment are by no means unusual.

The campus of the university in Addis Ababa is politically quiet, but underneath the surface, there is broad antigovernment sentiment. More than 70 percent of the district of the capital that contains the university is said to have voted against the new constitution in the referendum that was held in February 1987. Instructors from the East are not popular at the university. The few Americans and Europeans who have taught there in the past few years have been well received. The U.S. has had two Fulbright grantees at the university this past year who were warmly welcomed by students and faculty alike. More could be accommodated. Pressure for education is so great and the need for competent teaching in English so obvious that ideologues have frequently had to give way to pragmatists on questions of staffing.

During my stay in March the ceremonial arches and monuments erected in the capital in honor of the founding of the party 2-1/2 years before were looking shabby. They have reportedly been renewed to honor the proclamation of the People's Republic. But aside from a new party headquarters building, there is little new construction in the capital. Recent restrictions of private house construction to buildings containing no more than 70 meters of floor space are causing much resentment and rancor because, unlike so many other PMGSE restrictions, they are difficult to circumvent.

Religion

The most noteworthy new building in Addis Ababa is the enormous church called Addis Mikael which has been built by popular enthusiasm, and entirely at private expense, on a large expanse of land west of the Mercato. The grounds have not yet been entirely landscaped but there must have been 10,000 people attending early morning services at this spectacular church when I visited it the last Sunday in March. Each Sunday morning the entire capital is dominated by sounds of religious services being broadcast from loudspeakers at every church in the city. All are well attended. After formal services, evangelical preachers attract large crowds in churchyards. At every one of the more than a dozen churches I visited during my time in Addis Ababa, the crowds were predominantly young. A vesper service at St. George's Cathedral was attended primarily by young men. The regime's prohibition of Sunday driving encourages church attendance but devotion to religion is by no means only a Christian phenomenon. Mosques are equally well attended on Fridays and Muslim holidays, and both churches and mosques are being renovated and built in many parts of the country. The regime has recently taken measures against Koranic schools and is no longer perceived as attempting to be more favorable to Islam than to Christianity. Party members are expected to avoid religious services of all kinds.

RESETTLEMENT

Resettlement and villagization dominate any serious discussion of where Ethiopia is heading, how it will be able to feed itself, how it can manage to develop, and whether it can ever expect to pay its way in the world. Resettlement was stopped in early 1986 after 500,000-600,000 people were transferred from the center and north to the southwest. PMGSE and WPE officials readily admitted to me that many mistakes were made--too rapid movement of people, poor preparation of resettlement areas, and inadequate provision for servicing of the needs of resettlers. To the extent that new settlements are succeeding--and it is too early to declare any of them an unqualified success--it is (a) because criticism from abroad and negative reactions within the country have forced the government to allocate additional resources to them and (b) because several foreign donors have allocated substantial aid to them. Italy is said to have committed $60 million to the Pawe area in Gojjam.

Kishe

I visited the Kishe resettlement area in Kaffa. I saw nothing there to confirm the impression that has been conveyed by some accounts depicting resettlement areas as camps under armed guard. The area, a broad valley at about 4000 feet, had been cleared in prerevolutionary times for commercial agricultural development. The soil looked good and there was plentiful water. Over an area of perhaps 20 miles, a dozen villages were laid out in grids with each house having 1000 square meters of land to cultivate in its immediate vicinity. The settlement was not yet self-sufficient, though growing some food. It was sustained primarily through the efforts of the Jesuit Relief Service on which the WPE officials administering it readily acknowledged dependence.

Settlers from Tigre and Wollo, both Christians and Muslims, were mixed together. There was a rudimentary clinic and each village was said to have a six-year school. The one I visited was up to average Ethiopian rural standards with young teachers who appeared well motivated. Officials in charge of the site listed a whole series of problems: Oxen brought from the highlands fell sick and died at the

lower altitude and were being replaced gradually by animals bought in the area. Huge East German tractors, of which the site had 17, were not adequate to plow all the land available and frequently needed repairs. As a result, settlers who applied were granted additional land to farm on a private basis, and many had taken advantage of the opportunity to raise produce which they sold to others or marketed in the area.

Though the site had no cooperative stores and there seemed to be no plans for establishing them at an early date, all private craft and commercial activity was forbidden. Settlers, however, were free to go to traditional markets in nearby areas and did frequently. They were dependent on such markets and shops for elementary necessities such as salt, tea, coffee, sugar, and soap and to the extent that it was available, clothing as well, if they had money to purchase it. Some were buying chickens, goats, and even oxen for themselves. A tour of the site left the impression that life was not highly regimented but nevertheless austere. People were adapting--some planting gardens and trees, some building sheds and pens next to their houses. Construction of churches and mosques was not permitted but WPE administrators admitted that religious services were being held in individual houses.

There were disquieting aspects of this resettlement area that were revealing of both PMGSE techniques and ultimate intentions. It was clear that all the initiative came from *above*. The broad masses, in whose name and for whose benefit the PMGSE and WPE claim to rule, were given no hand in governing themselves. And though it was impossible for a foreigner on a brief visit to determine the real attitudes of the settlers toward the whole process that had brought them here, it would be naive to assume that it had not been relatively coercive. I was struck by the fact that the site was administered entirely by WPE officials sent out from the regional planning office in Jimma. These people come for only short tours of duty and all hope to be reassigned after a few months. The longest any official in the group which briefed me had been at Kishe was 13 months and he felt transfer was overdue. The group presently in charge was the third that had administered the site since its establishment. These men, mostly in their late 20s or 30s, seemed serious and undogmatic, but they were clearly a caste apart

from the people in their charge--a *New Class*. They were all dressed in clean, fresh party uniforms; all wore good shoes; all had wristwatches; many wore the chrome-rimmed glasses that now seem to be a ubiquitous status symbol among WPE members. They all looked as if they had had a shower within the last day or two and had shaved that morning. None of the resettlers did. I do not mean to imply that these WPE men seemed to be indulging in idle "luxury" for its own sake. I had the impression they worked hard and took their jobs seriously. They were merely characteristic of the spirit of "Ethiopian socialism"--it is imposed from the top down and the broad masses have no alternative but to accept it. The system is at least as paternalistic and much more coercive and intrusive as the imperial system it replaced.

I found it impossible to escape the feeling as I toured Kishe, and afterward as I was briefed at the Southwestern Regional Office of the Central Planning Commission in Jimma on resettlement throughout its region (comprising Kaffa, Illubabor and Wollega), that the hard-core WPE ideologues' goal for these resettlement areas would be to operate them as vast state farms with brigades of smiling workers singing revolutionary songs and chanting socialist slogans while joyfully implementing the Central Planners' directives, leading communal lives uncontaminated by either religion or private commercial activity, and spending their evenings and weekends at party meetings condemning laggards and foreign imperialists, and endorsing resolutions calling for higher quotas in next year's plan.

This is, of course, an impossible goal and most of the party people on the spot know it. They are increasingly preoccupied with the elementary task of holding these resettlement areas together and bringing them to the point of producing a reasonable share of their basic food requirements.

The Case for Resettlement

There has always been a good case for resettlement in Ethiopia. It is not a new concept. The country's long history is essentially a story of settlers moving southward, introducing new crops and more advanced agricultural techniques and other features of early North Ethiopian civilization, including Christianity. This process gained unprecedented

momentum after the campaigns of Menelik II in the late 19th century brought vast areas of the south and southwest under firm and direct imperial authority. Haile Selassie encouraged many kinds of resettlement and development of new regions. U.S. AID supported some of these, notably in the southern Ogaden. These undertakings were essentially voluntary, and incentives and enticements were offered to attract settlers who made most of their own decisions.

There is a sound rationale for encouraging some Ethiopians to leave overpopulated, environmentally degraded regions subject to drought and famine. If the regime had gone at this process on a more modest scale and with better preparation, it could probably have attracted on a voluntary basis all the resettlers who could be reasonably accommodated. The fact that those brought in have been put into situations where the basic arrangements all point toward imposition of collectivization or state farms has doubtlessly antagonized many of the settlers. Their lives have been made more difficult by prohibitions on most forms of private initiative by which they could help themselves: practicing crafts, trading, operating shops, providing elementary services, and making provision for their religious needs.

What will happen to these resettlement areas? Will resettlement be resumed? The government will have to continue to make ideological compromises to keep them working so that they can reach a reasonable level of viability. Drought and famine in the north again this year, where most of the resettlers originate, will discourage those who might aspire to return. But a new food crisis also has the effect of further curtailing the scarce resources the regime can afford to invest to maintain and improve existing resettlement projects. When donors consistently press for concessions in return for continued assistance, the regime will have to respond, at least in part, to their conditions. If donors provide aid with few strings attached, as some are doing now on purely humanitarian grounds, it may have little permanent effect. There is a good deal of evidence that WPE officials are making pragmatic adjustments locally that do not always have the open sanction of their superiors in the capital.

I left Kishe with the feeling that even if all controls were lifted the next day, a sizable proportion of resettlers, if assured of elementary security and some support from donor agencies, would be likely to remain. Left to their own devices, many of these resettlers could undoubtedly make a success of agriculture in their new homes. The most urgent need, if these sites are to be made genuinely productive, is for intelligent agricultural services--advice and help with seeds, fertilizers, planting and cultivating techniques, suitable breeding stock and veterinary services, and provision of low-cost appropriate technology--instead of East German tractors. If the government and party administrators were to confine their efforts to these challenging tasks and give private initiative and free market principles some scope to operate, they would have more than enough to do and, with success, the sites might even attract further settlers on a completely voluntary basis.

VILLAGIZATION

Much the same can be said of the regime's approach to villagization, though it is an inherently more questionable process than resettlement and should have been undertaken on a small experimental scale, if there was any real necessity for making it a priority objective now at all. While resettlement is not having a negative effect on food production and could, under favorable circumstances, lead to some net gains[5] no such positive assumptions can be made for villagization. The best that can be said is that it has yet had little

[5]This is because large tracts of fertile land which has hitherto been uncultivated are being brought into production. At a minimum the resettlers in most locations should soon be able to produce enough food to feed themselves, which they were not able to do in regions that they left. The fact that the regime aims to operate the resettlement areas essentially as state farms, however, is disquieting. Experience with state farms in Ethiopia (as almost everywhere) is poor. They require expensive inputs and a a great deal of bureaucratic favoritism to maintain high levels of productivity. A more open system, which would provide settlers with support and incentives but leave them free to maximize the results of their own labor and initiatives would be much more likely to yield surpluses that could help alleviate the country's growing food deficit.

measurable impact on production. It appears extremely unlikely to result in *increased* production.[6] The real costs of villagization are high in proportion to expected economic benefits.

The government has justified villagization primarily as a method of improving the quality of life of the rural population: better housing, improved sanitation and health services, easier access to education, better supply of consumer goods, easier provision of agricultural extension services, access to improved water supplies and, eventually, electrification. A few favored model villages in central Shoa have been provided with some of these amenities--multiroomed houses with tin roofs, improved cooking facilities, wells, latrines, health stations, schools, and access to the services of social workers and agricultural extension agents. At least 95 percent of the new villages are devoid of *all* such amenities. Calculations of resources available to the Ethiopian government for rural development programs quickly lead to the conclusion that even with the best intentions the means for providing elementary amenities do not exist and with present economic policies cannot be created.

But what *were* the leadership's intentions in decreeing villagization? It is difficult to escape the conclusion that no matter what was said, three considerations that have nothing to do with welfare were primary in the minds of top Marxist-Leninist ideologues: (a) gaining full control over production, (b) preparing the way for collectivization and (c) enforcing physical control over the rural population. There is a built-in illogic to the villages that appears designed to create preconditions for collectivization.

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[6] John M. Cohen and Nils-Ivar Isaksson, *Villagization in the Arsi Region of Ethiopia*, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, International Rural Development Center, Uppsala, February 1987, is the most objective study made to date of the effects of villagization. Its most important conclusion: "The short and long term effects of villagization will constrain Arsi's farmers from producing the agricultural yields essential for their region to contribute to the economic development of Ethiopia and help reduce their country's increasingly large annual food deficit.... If the objective of the government is to improve the productivity and well being of rural people, then [it] should reconsider its present position and postpone further villagization."

Problems of New Villages

Villages tend to be gigantic in size. I visited Arussi villages with 500 houses. Living in close proximity, all villagers must conform and none can go his own way without risking neighbors informing on him. With few exceptions villages are laid out like army camps, in grids, in the midst of open fields. In most, very little land has been left around houses for gardens, auxiliary structures, or animal pens. Farmers retain their previous land and must walk as much as five or six miles each day to work it. They are forbidden, however, to retain structures on it where they could remain overnight. Thus the danger of crop loss to wild animals or thievery is increased--and the opportunity for uncontrolled activity by the rural population greatly reduced.

Keeping animals around isolated farmsteads or small groups of houses poses few problems. Maintaining large numbers of animals in oversize villages creates many difficulties, including potential health hazards. Some villages have already adopted common herding and large common pens for livestock, but most peasants are wary of them because they fear that loss of control over their plow oxen puts them at the mercy of party officials who want to press them into collectives. Thus the character of these villages appears designed to support the argument that since long walks to fields waste time and individual care of animals is inefficient, peasants should join together to farm collectively. This does not seem to have happened yet, however, to any significant degree.

Were the peasants *forced* into villages? Are they held there by *force*? I heard no allegations that peasants were marched into villages at gunpoint, nor are soldiers or unusual numbers of police visible in rural areas. The process of villagization was more insidious, largely the result of sustained bureaucratic pressure, but essentially coercive. Promises of improved conditions of life doubtlessly eased the transition for some peasants. In some areas villages were built and people moved into them in one sweeping operation where it was very difficult for individuals to resist. A more common pattern involves a good deal of gradualism. Peasants are persuaded or pressed to take down their existing houses and carry the components to village sites where they are

reerected. Some houses do not lend themselves to being moved so new ones are built. The net result is almost always a poorer house than the peasant's family originally lived in. Fences, pens, and storage structures all have to be built anew.

It was evident in areas of southwestern Shoa and Kaffa through which I traveled that peasants were moving into villages reluctantly and slowly. Many villages were in place but only half-occupied. Where were the people slated to occupy them? Still living in their original houses? Away with relatives? It was hard to determine. A great deal more study of conditions in specific rural areas would have to be done to provide an adequate picture of the social and psychological impact of villagization on the people affected. Without this it is difficult to estimate their eventual reaction to various kinds of problems and crises that may result from villagization.

Water has always been a problem in the Ethiopian countryside, either too abundant or scarce, and for human and animal use usually obtained from springs and streams and often unclean. New villages were supposed to be provided with wells. Of perhaps 35 I saw, none had wells. In most, the women were trekking as far across the countryside to bring back water in huge pots on their backs as the men did to plow their fields. Elementary sanitary facilities--pit latrines--are almost unknown and have never been felt very necessary in rural Ethiopia. Their absence poses no problem when a population is widely scattered over the landscape. It is bound to become a health hazard when 2000-3000 people are concentrated on a few hundred acres. Schools in villages are as rare as wells. I asked many children how far they had to go to school. A two-hour walk each way was not uncommon.

The clearest indication of the regime's *ideological preoccupations* in these villages is its prohibition, as in resettlement sites, of private initiative of all kinds: shops, craftsmen, and religious facilities. These are a central feature of genuine village life the world over. Most villages are not permitted to hold weekly markets within their precincts. The regime sees villages as forcing frames for Marxist-Leninist socialization of the rural population. One of the first structures built in the new villages is an *aderash*, a meeting hall. Some of these are quite elaborate, some crude, but all serve as

places where party representatives can summon villagers to lecture them on the virtues of socialism and the requirements for delivering their production quotas to the state. They may, of course, be used for literacy classes and lectures on agricultural practices as well.

Very few villages have even a modest "cooperative" store for sale of elementary necessities, though these too were promised. Even when present, such stores are often inadequate to supply basic needs. Villagers, like the people in resettlement areas, go to nearby markets and existing small towns to satisfy their minimal needs for buying and selling. There is no doubt already a great deal of unofficial economic activity. Churches and mosques, of course, are also forbidden in the new villages. Those previously used continue to be and people walk long distances to them. Despite official discouragement, religion continues to be practiced as enthusiastically in the countryside as in the cities.

CONTRADICTIONS AND DILEMMAS

While resettlement has been stopped, villagization has not been. The entire province of Arussi has been villagized and so has much of Shoa. The government's aim appears to be to transfer the greater portion of the rural population of the entire southern half of the country into villages as soon as possible. There are few reports of organized resistance to the process but there is evidence of passive resistance in many forms.

It is impossible to argue that some degree of concentration of rural population in many parts of Ethiopia could not have advantages for both the people and the authorities. Gradual formation of villages and country towns has been occurring in many parts of Ethiopia for a long time. The regime would be on much firmer ground in villagization, as in resettlement, if it had taken an experimental approach with incentives: setting up promised facilities and seeking volunteers to settle, permitting those who preferred not to to remain in their old homesteads. Instead, the government and party have invested their prestige in a coercive and deceptive system which is likely to require more coercion and deception to maintain.

Could the system be improved or dismantled? If large-scale foreign assistance could be obtained to provide some of the promised amenities, some villages could no doubt be transformed into flourishing examples of a more modern rural life. But sizable foreign assistance for this purpose seems extremely unlikely, especially if there is further movement toward collectivization. Lifting the restrictions on crafts, trade, and individual enterprise would probably have an immediate positive effect, but it would undermine the regime's aim of gaining complete control over marketing of produce.

In spite of the advantages the new villages give the regime for control, nonofficial grain sale is said to be increasing. Some local party officials are not above engaging in such activities for their own gain. Prices paid farmers for grain are so low they encourage illicit sales. The problem of overcoming the built-in illogic of the land cultivation and animal management arrangements that have resulted from the creation of giant villages is more difficult to solve and may, indeed, defy solution. Collectivization itself would be no solution and would further depress productivity.

Many observers believe the new villages increase risks of erosion and disease both among animals and humans. What will happen if villagized regions are severely affected by famine? This is only the most dramatic of the hard questions the villagization program raises--not simply for outside observers but for the Marxist-Leninist ideologues themselves. The Ethiopian regime has dashed into a program for massive transformation of the countryside--where more than 85 percent of the rapidly increasing population of the country lives, without having thought the program through, or studied experiences such as that of Tanzania. It may eventually discover that it has a whole troop of tigers by the tail.

Some of the most productive areas in the center and south of the country have not been villagized. I visited two: (a) the coffee-growing regions of Kaffa and (b) Gurageland.

COFFEE AND COFFEE-GROWING

Coffee plays almost exactly the same role in the Ethiopian economy that sugar does in Cuba and experience under Marxism-Leninism has been almost identical. The regime's continual exertions have never resulted in a significant increase in coffee exports. Nevertheless, the country is more dependent on exporting coffee to earn foreign exchange than it was before the Revolution. Ethiopia's total exports have been falling while import costs have risen sharply in recent years. To make matters worse, world coffee prices have fallen in the past two years and show no sign of rising soon. Ethiopia desperately needs foreign exchange and there is little the government can do to earn it except encourage coffee production and try to control as much of the coffee trade as possible. With the underground economy continually expanding and with increased participation in illicit activities by government and party officials themselves, this is a daunting task. Roadblocks along highways from the southwest attempt to prevent smuggling, but there is little evidence of large-scale effectiveness.

In the coffee-growing regions measures have recently been taken to encourage private coffee farmers to expand plantings and improve quality. Here, too, as in all agricultural endeavor in Ethiopia, Western development aid plays an important role. Outside of Agaro in northwestern Kaffa I visited a coffee tree nursery financed by the EEC. Vast quantities of choice seedlings were in various stages of growth. Instead of being supplied only to state farms and producer cooperatives, seedlings from this nursery are now also being made available to private farmers.

Here, too, the regime cannot resist showing some bias against the private farmer. The price per seedling for cooperatives is four santims, that for private farmers, six. Only a small portion of coffee cultivation has been brought under direct state control. The regime has had to defer its plans for expansion of state farms for coffee growing and shift to trying to maximize production by small private producers. None of these can have many doubts about what the party bureaucrats' ultimate intentions toward them are.

In Jimma during my briefing at the Southwestern Branch Office of the Central Planning Commission, which has expanded from 11 to 187 people during the past three years, it was clear that Addis Ababa has set two serious priorities for this region: increased coffee production and successful management of resettlement areas. The branch office seems to be occupied mostly with simply charting the resources of the region, which are considerable, and outlining development schemes of many kinds--power, irrigation, forest products, introduction of new crops and development of agro-industry--which would require substantial capital investment that Ethiopia, with its present policies, can neither attract from abroad or generate from internal resources. These were not the only officials I encountered in Ethiopia who spoke with naive hope of foreign investment, citing recent changes in laws. They did not seem to understand that foreign investors do not make their decisions on the basis of laws alone. They seemed oblivious to the possibilities local private initiative might offer for accelerated economic development.

GURAGELAND

Southernmost of Ethiopia's Semitic-speaking peoples, the Gurage, who live in a fertile, well watered region directly southwest of Addis Ababa, are known all over the country for their skill as gardeners and their diligence as workers, traders, and entrepreneurs. Perhaps as much as 40 percent of the population of Addis Ababa is of Gurage origin, for Gurageland functioned as a reservoir of manpower for the capital as it grew. Gurage move readily to other parts of the south, too, though they retain ties with their home area.

Gurage agriculture revolves around cultivation of the false banana, *ensete edulis*, coffee, vegetables, and rational cattle husbandry--small numbers of animals well cared for as producers of milk, butter, and cheese. Though a few small towns have grown up as administrative centers during the past 50 years, the great majority of Gurage still live in small clusters of houses among their ensete and vegetable patches with neat fenced compounds and even lawns. Their country is one of the most thickly settled regions in the country. The well-constructed, large, round, thatched *tukuls* are among the most attractive traditional houses in Ethiopia.

I had not been in the Gurage country since before the Revolution and was especially curious to see what might have changed. I found that very little had changed. I spent a full day traversing the heart of Gurageland from Welkite through Endeber to Hosaenna (into regions inhabited by Hadiya and Kambatta) and returned to Addis Ababa via Butajira and the Awash bridge at Melka Kontoure. Except at the very northern edge of Gurageland, where the Gurage are intermixed with Oromo, there was no villagization. People from Endeber southward said they were not going to be villagized--it did not fit the pattern of their agriculture and settlement. The best evidence that they believed this was the fact that throughout this region, new houses were being constructed, and old ones rethatched, in the traditional scattered clusters of homesites.

Food, including fresh meat, was plentiful at country markets and traditional handicrafts, for which the Gurage are also famous, were on sale in quantity: baskets, pottery, items of metal and wood. Prices were little changed from what I knew them to be almost 20 years ago with the exception of locally woven cotton cloth (*buluqo*), which was 4 to 5 times the 1970 price. People looked no better dressed than before the Revolution, but not much worse.

Kabul

At Kabul, on the edge of a dramatic escarpment between territory inhabited by the Gurage and Hadiya (and consequently a meeting place for both), I saw a striking example of the natural growth of a large rural village. When I had last visited Kabul in 1972, it was an open area with a few makeshift pole structures that served as the heart of a vast gathering each Saturday of 10,000-15,000 people at a traditional market. During the rest of the week no one lived there. During the past 15 years, Kabul has turned into a permanent settlement with a resident population of several hundred who live and work in houses and shops ranged along both sides of the highway that passes directly through the site. Bars, simple restaurants, shopkeepers, and craftsmen of many kinds have established themselves and there is even a WPE office. On Saturdays the traditional market still spreads into all the open spaces

around. People come to it now by minibus as well as on foot and horseback.

There was no sign of villagization in the terraced hill country between Kabul and Hosaenna. In Hosaenna a curious project with no visible relationship to any economic priority was under way. All the buildings along the main street, originally built of *chiqa* (wattle and daub) with tin roofs, were being given stone fronts, but the interior of the buildings themselves remained exactly as before. The result will be a town with a deceptively solid and new appearance but actually little changed.

Hosaenna

We arrived in Hosaenna toward the end of a Saturday afternoon. The streets were filled with people strolling. Young people, teenage boys and girls, many dressed in T-shirts and jackets with American and European university and commercial logos and slogans, predominated. Everywhere in Ethiopia I was struck by the sheer numbers of people, above all young people. One can sense that the population is growing more rapidly than ever.

In the countryside, especially in established villages, the number of young children was everywhere impressive. Though World Bank statistics indicate that the infant mortality rate has been increasing during the current decade, birthrates remain high. A single farmer in an Arussi village posed for me with 12 children, all of whom he insisted were his. The oldest could have been no more than 14.

This steadily increasing population, growing at the rate of 1.2-1.4 million each year, must first of all be fed. The PMGSE/PDRE has little prospect, as long as it adheres to present economic policies, of being able to do that. Steadily increasing numbers of young people expect to be educated and provided with productive employment. One clear accomplishment of the Ethiopian Revolution is that it has raised the aspirations of the population for modernization and development. Fewer and fewer Ethiopians are content to go on living the life of their fathers. But how can Marxism-Leninism, a system which has failed everywhere it has been applied, offer any hope of meeting the expectations of these people?

WAR-TORN ERITREA

I was pleased that the PMGSE responded so readily to my request to go to Eritrea. I flew from Addis Ababa to Asmara, spent a night and part of a day there, drove to Massawa and stayed overnight, then drove back to Asmara for the better part of another day and night. I was assured that if I had had more time, I could have traveled to many other places, including the Dahlak Islands. I had not been in Eritrea since 1972. I was surprised at how little had changed in Asmara and in what good condition the city remains. Even though it was experiencing a severe water shortage when I was there and all water used in the city was being trucked in and distributed from barrels at street corners, the city was clean, flowers were blooming everywhere, and there was no visible damage from fighting.

Though the struggle in Eritrea is between Marxists on both sides, Marxism is not much in evidence. The garish iconography, the signs and banners with slogans and red flags and monuments that are so prevalent in Addis Ababa and visible in other parts of the country are mostly absent. I had the opportunity to talk to many government and party officials. What impressed me about these people was how little ideological jargon they used, how nationalistic they were in all their attitudes and how preoccupied they were with operating the city and the province and coping with real problems.

There were several meetings going on while I was in Asmara: a group of Nationalities Institute people had come up from Addis Ababa for a two-day meeting. A team of Addis Ababa University people were helping administer the Ethiopian School Leaving-Examination (ESLC) in Eritrea for which students were sitting throughout the country that week.[7] The newly appointed defense minister was meeting with military commanders from Eritrea and Tigre. I was introduced to him in the lobby of the Ambasoara Hotel and sat at lunchtime a short distance away from a long

[7]Success in this examination is mandatory for university entrance. Over 200,000 graduating secondary school students were expected to take it throughout the country, I was told. Of these, places for only a few thousand, 3 to 4 percent of the total at most, could be provided in the country's higher educational institutions.

table where he was holding a luncheon conference with about a dozen senior officers. They looked seasoned and serious. Here, as elsewhere during my Eritrean visit, I was surprised at how few obvious security precautions were observed. The Ambasoara seems to be the elite gathering place in Asmara and does have security guards at its entrance. It was a comfortable hotel to stay in though it provided water only for an hour in the morning and for a briefer period late in the day.

One of the few examples of revolutionary construction in Asmara is a stadium that has been built for political rallies. Its gate features a portrait of Mengistu framed at night in blinking red lights, like an old-fashioned movie marquee. Local citizens seemed more embarrassed by the bad taste than angered. The former municipality has become Eritrean WPE headquarters, but the great majority of the city's Italian-style buildings, its many churches, mosques, and hotels are unaltered from prerevolutionary times. Shops and espresso bars are open along palm-shaded National (formerly Haile Selassie) Avenue. New construction is almost as rare as in Addis Ababa. An attractive restaurant and park have been built on a hill in the northern part of the city and along the airport road I saw some new apartments.

Asmara's Problems

The population of Asmara has risen to more than 400,000. Large numbers of people have come in from the countryside, including many young men eager to avoid being pressed into guerrilla service by the insurgents. They apparently prefer to risk being drafted into Ethiopian forces, but few from Eritrea are conscripted. Finding work is the most serious problem these young men face. Many occupy themselves by study. Their highest aspiration, unless they can make their way abroad, is overcrowded and understaffed Asmara University. The university has 1600 regular students, who come from all parts of Ethiopia and are assigned on the basis of their performance in ESLC, and more than 1800 night and part-time students who are all local.

The university's president told me he would somehow accommodate four or five times that number if he had instructors. He did not display much enthusiasm for the small number of East Europeans on his teaching staff, and said he hoped Americans and other English speakers

could be persuaded to come. Instruction at the university is in English. Most popular courses are engineering, accounting, business management and what little they are able to provide in computer science. Most students are equipping themselves for work abroad. Many hope to emigrate to Europe and the United States.

Those who cannot get into the university--the great majority--study in high schools or in private and crowd the city's libraries. The former American library continues to operate under the municipality with its entire stock of books intact. The mayor took me to see another newly opened library stocked with books donated by a Canadian foundation. They were almost all of American origin and included recent works on history, economics, politics and literature. This library was crowded on a Saturday morning with young men and a few young women and compared favorably in atmosphere and holdings with any good municipal library in the United States. Libraries remain open on weekends and have liberal borrowing policies. A few Soviet-supplied Marxist classics were ritually displayed in a corner of these libraries but unused.[8]

Eritrean Industry

Eritrean party secretary Teferra Wonde[9] told me proudly that Eritrea still accounts for more than one-third of all industry in Ethiopia and that more than 42 industrial installations were operating. They are clearly eager to get as much production out of them as possible. I made a quickly arranged visit to the nationalized Asmara Textile (formerly Barattolo) Factory, which employs over 3000 workers, more than half of them women. It has been dressed up as a classic Bolshevik industrial installation, with murals of sturdy marching

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[8] I observed the same phenomenon in the libraries of the Public Health Institute and Agricultural College in Jimma. These institutions' libraries were both originally American-donated and, though now dated, are still getting heavy use. USIA and the University of Oklahoma have recently undertaken efforts to begin updating them.

[9] A medical doctor specializing in parasitology, Teferra spent two years at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and also studied in France. He succeeded Dawit Wolde Giorgis in the Asmara post in 1983. Both he and his wife are WPE Central Committee members. When the PDRE government was formed in September 1987, he was transferred to Addis Ababa as a deputy prime minister.

workers and the New Trinity (Marx-Engels-Lenin) as well as Mengistu painted in bright colors on the buildings that front on the main courtyard. The air in the main spinning and weaving halls was thick with lint and barely a third of the machines were operating. Charts in the director's office indicated that the plant had never met its production or sales quotas. One section, where new Italian machinery was being used to make T-shirts and other knitwear, was clean and seemed to be operating at a high level of efficiency. Production is primarily for export to Western Europe, I was told. I was also told by the director with great satisfaction that sufficient raw cotton to meet the plant's needs was now supplied from western Eritrea.

Food Supply

I visited several markets in Asmara: grain, spice, handicrafts, livestock, second-hand items of every description. All were crowded and most well supplied. Grain appears to be coming in from abroad and is available in great quantity at essentially the same prices as in the central part of the country. At the main central market there were great racks of shopping and utility bags made of the sacks in which EEC-, U.S.-, and Canadian-donated grain had been shipped. They were cut so that the print and flags were still displayed. In another section, attractive utility chests were being made from tins in which oil and other Western-supplied foods had come. Eritreans are thus reminded every day where much of their food is coming from. They seem to be doing well with their own fruit and vegetables. If Russians who come to Eritrea venture into public markets, they see heaps of melons, papayas, bananas, oranges, and lemons, all kinds of vegetables and ample supplies of herbs, spices, and legumes--a sharp contrast to the queues that form even for tomatoes along Gorky Street in Moscow.

The livestock market was lively with large numbers of the broad-horned oxen that are common in this part of the world. Men offering them for sale had in some instances driven them all the way from Tessenei and Agordat. I did not have the opportunity to determine what the main movements of trade and goods in Eritrea are, but it is clear that Asmara is still an important trading center for goods of many kinds. How much of the economy functions underground is unclear to me,

but there is said to be a good deal of interchange between areas under PMGSE and insurgent control. The basis for profitable agro-industry, supplying other parts of the country and exporting, still exists.

The Escarpment Region

Like Asmara, the Eritrean escarpment looked surprisingly normal. The highway is in sound condition and carries heavy traffic in both directions. Drivers must leave either end no later than 2 p.m. There is no movement at night except by military vehicles. The railway remains inoperative and would require a heavy investment to be put back in working order. Ethiopian army camps, guardposts, and vehicles are everywhere in evidence along the route to Massawa. The soldiers all look like southerners. The towns along the escarpment are populated, busy, and show relatively little damage. Many, such as Nefasit and Embatcala, with their church spires and minarets almost side by side against a backdrop of mountains, are remarkably picturesque. Most towns had small markets where peasants were selling fruit and vegetables. Climate changes abruptly in this region. There had been no rain in Asmara or on the upper escarpment for months, but in mid-March the middle and lower escarpment region was still enjoying generous winter rains. Fields and semi-forested hillsides were green, corn was ripening and wild flowers were blooming along the roadsides. The arable land in this region is intensively cultivated.

At the foot of the escarpment the Samhar, the Red Sea desert, begins. At first there are doum palms in dry watercourses and scrub acacia on rocky hillsides. Nearer the sea the land is almost devoid of vegetation. A large Red Star was placed on a barren knoll overlooking the battlefield of Dogali in January of this year to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Ras Alula's defeat of the Italians nine years before the fateful Battle of Adowa. There were occasional signs of more recent combat throughout this region: pock-marked bridges, wrecked guardposts, and a modern power line with wires dangling and stork nests on the concrete pylons. Near the coast we saw small caravans of scrawny camels moving toward Massawa.

Massawa

Massawa occupies two peninsulas that jut out from the mainland and two islands. Most of the buildings on the mainland are in ruin. The railyards are a jumble of wrecked cars and engines. This was the area which the insurgents captured in the winter of 1977-78. Factional rivalries kept them from devising a strategy to capture the rest of the city and they were eventually forced to retreat under Russian aerial and sea bombardment. The old city, still probably the most unspoiled of all traditional Red Sea trading ports, occupies the outermost island. This and the island of Taulud, which lies closer to the mainland, remained in Ethiopian hands during the crisis and suffered no destruction. The Red Sea Hotel on Taulud remains one of the most attractive in Ethiopia. Its gardens are well maintained and its rooms and bathrooms work well. Its restaurant provided good food, including fresh local fish. With its long dock extending out into the clear, sandy-bottomed sea toward mangrove covered Green Island, it could be a first-class tourist attraction, like the picturesque old city itself.

I was the guest while in Massawa of the governor of the Red Sea Province, the party Secretary and the mayor. The first is a native Eritrean from Akele Guzay, the second a former police officer from Sendafa in Shoa, and the mayor a Catholic Bilen from Keren. They were frank in discussing the problems of the city and their hopes for it. Massawa has barely 18,000 of its former 45,000 inhabitants. Electricity and water are ample. The naval base, the port, and the salt works are all operating and there is a little commercial fishing to supply local needs and Asmara. A few craftsmen operate shops making shoes and other leather goods. The salt works had recently sold 20,000 tons of salt to the Japanese at 20 birr (U.S. $10) per ton, the officials told me. When I speculated whether it had not cost that to produce it, the party secretary replied, "Perhaps, but it was foreign exchange." What advantage the city itself gets from earning foreign exchange I did not determine, but discussion with these officials centered entirely around possibilities for foreign investment and export earnings. Here, too, Marxism seemed irrelevant and was never mentioned.

The nearby waters teemed with lobster, shrimp, and fish, the officials said. They were involved in talks with Italians about setting up a fishing industry with a freezing plant. I did not get the impression these were moving very fast. The officials were keenly interested in tourism. This seemed even more theoretical. The party secretary took me to see a recently opened casino and motel on the mainland beach at Gursum, north of the city. The area had seen heavy fighting in 1978. The outdoor bar and dancing area were lively on a Friday evening with a large party of weekend visitors, a group of several dozen young adults who had come down on an organized bus tour from Massawa under the auspices of their trade union.

The most impressive new undertaking I saw in Massawa was a boatyard where ferroconcrete fishing boats, up to 10 tons in size, were being built under a project funded by the World Lutheran Federation. The director of this operation is an energetic Ethiopian who served for many years as head of the East African Locust Control Organization. Boats currently under construction are for the inhabitants of the Dahlak Islands, where a fishing port is under construction. We went on a cruise in one of them. It was manned by Ethiopian navy men wearing Wrangler T-shirts. As we made our way over clear water rich with marine life, with a fine view of the skyline of the old city, the director called our attention to a helicopter flying over it: "That's Russian," he chuckled; "I'm getting some good out of them by having them haul cement and construction materials out to the Dahlak Islands for my fishing project."

I spent an hour this same morning walking around the old city with the party secretary and mayor. Streets were clean but felt empty. A burlap-wrapped statue of Haile Selassie still overlooked the commercial harbor, where two cargo vessels were unloading. The mayor pointed out a new housing development that was being completed among the ruins across the bay and the party secretary talked of the need to generate employment. Two large mosques appeared to have been recently painted. Men, young and old, were passing the time fishing off the seawall beneath the lighthouse at the seaward extremity of the island. Boys were playing soccer in nearby streets. As in much of Eritrea, the

situation was neither war nor peace, but a condition of suspended animation. It is a sad fate for a region that still has the potential to be an African Switzerland. I left Eritrea convinced that economic rejuvenation would make almost all its problems solvable. Neither the Yenan-style Marxism of the the EPLF[10] nor Mengistu's dogmatic Marxist militarism appears to offer much prospect of bringing this about.

PMGSE/PDRE CHALLENGES

Military Drain

Eritrea is not the only Ethiopian problem that the country's leadership is unable to bend to its will. Nor is it the only insurgency. A larger portion of the province of Tigre than of Eritrea may be held by insurgents. Much of the province of Gondar and of the highlands of Wollo are only partially controlled by the government. "Control" is a relative concept. Throughout many of these regions, government and insurgent influence fluctuate and interpenetrate--people accept government services but evade compliance with the government's policies. They know that the government cannot protect them from insurgents by night even if Ethiopian military forces can achieve temporary dominance by day. Partial dominance is an inadequate basis for compromise or political creativity, for both sides are compelled by their insecurities toward intransigence.

Everything I heard led me to suspect that Ethiopian commanders are having increasing difficulty getting their men to fight well. On the other hand, the insurgents are not finding it easy to maintain the momentum of their forces. Insurgent life appeals less and less to young men. In this respect the TPLF[11] is reportedly having less difficulty

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[10]The Eritrean People's Liberation Front. This faction was favored by Libya, Syria, and other radical Arab governments, Cuba, and the Soviets and received substantial support from them from the early 1970s onward. After 1977, when the Soviets fully embraced the PMGSE, conservative Arab governments became its main benefactors. By this time it had gained ascendancy over other Eritrean factions and has ever since maintained control of the northern Sahel and most of the Sudanese border region.

[11]The Tigrean People's Liberation Front, a Marxist movement which was originally fostered by the EPLF but during recent years has often been at odds with it. It has been less separatist than the Eritrean movement.

than the EPLF. It seems just barely possible to me that if the Ethiopian military forces were fighting less doggedly and destructively, the insurgents might also fight with less zeal--each would provoke the other less, and the population, which at this point can have little confidence in the ultimate triumph of either, could take more of its fate into its own hands. More flexible policies in Addis Ababa could contribute a great deal to bring about this kind of development.

Maintenance of large military forces, with the priority claim they have on Ethiopia's dwindling resources, deprives the PDRE of both funds and talent that could be invested in economic and social development. But there is a dilemma here too, for additional resources invested in unproductive development initiatives can be as wasteful as excess military expenditures. For years state farms have soaked up the lion's share of money allocated to agriculture. They were more productive when they were commercially run. A larger investment in efforts to make villagization more palatable to the people affected and more productive in terms of agricultural output would not necessarily be money well spent. Greater investment in inefficient nationalized industries might bring increased earnings in foreign exchange but no real gains in the economy as a whole. Increased efforts to control smuggling force people with skill to become more clever in circumventing the government's restrictions--including government and WPE officials themselves.

Economic Rigidity

Dogmatism and rigidity reap bitter dividends. Even the Russians recognize this and have been advising the PMGSE/PDRE to adopt more flexible economic policies for the past two years.[12] Why has the Ethiopian Marxist leadership resisted so stubbornly the advice it has been given from so many directions to reexamine its methods and its goals? Why has it resisted applying the lessons other African countries have learned to their sorrow? As yet there appears to be no clear answer.

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[12] I analyze in a forthcoming study the report completed in September 1985 by the Soviet advisory group in the Ethiopian Central Planning Commission.

On this visit, as before, I listened to WPE members and government officials lay the blame for Ethiopia's sad economic condition on (a) the wars the country has been fighting--both internally and externally--to defend her territorial integrity and (b) nature's unkindness. The arguments are specious. The policies the Derg adopted put the integrity of the country at risk before the end of 1974. The challenges from both Eritrean separatists and Somali irredentists could never have become serious problems if the Soviet Union and its surrogates had not armed and encouraged them. Why then seek an alliance with the Soviet Union and adopt its failed economic system as a model?

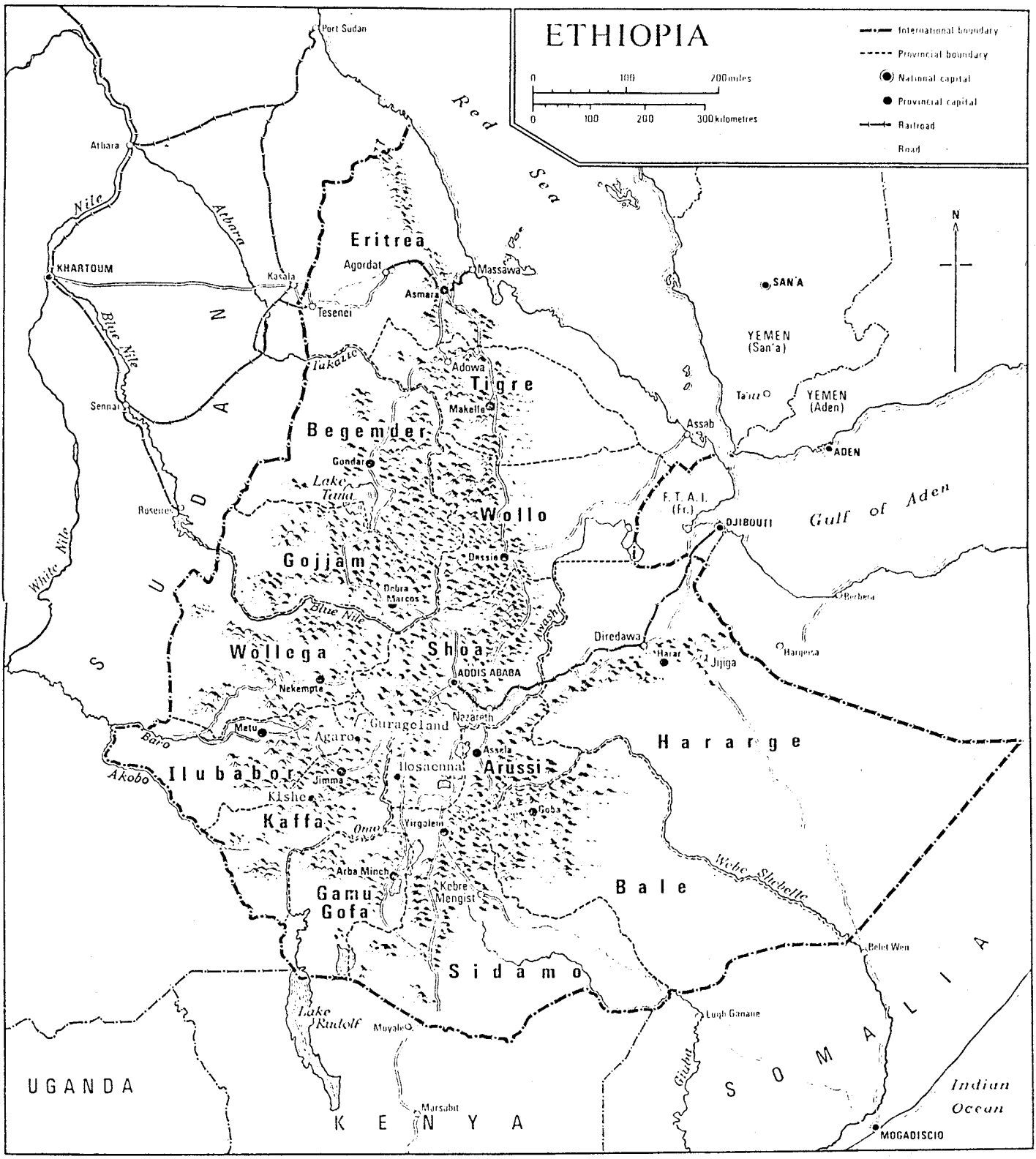
As for nature, it is difficult to make a case that weather has been uniquely unfavorable during recent years. Erratic weather has been a problem in this part of the world since ancient times. Modern governments have the means of taking both short- and long-term measures to minimize the effects of adverse weather. The present leadership had the example of the imperial regime's handling of the famine of 1973-1974 to serve as a warning. After the famine of 1984-1985, the WPE and government have far more extensive experience--and advice from which to learn. Mere proclamation of a People's Republic can have no magic effect. In fact, the effort diverted to its establishment has absorbed time and energy that could better have been expended on the country's real problems.

Food Deficit

Ethiopian leaders face a set of interlocking dilemmas which are bound to become more serious the longer they are ignored. The food deficit is growing as population increases and production lags or declines. There is nothing inevitable in this situation, however, for the country's agricultural potential remains one of the highest in Africa. WPE officials' insistence that present agricultural policies will increase production rests on mystic faith in Marxism-Leninism and the infallibility of current leadership. No realistic judgment, least of all current experience, supports this naive faith. Resettlement and villagization are diversions, not solutions to the problem of the country's backward peasantry.

More and more of the productive capacity in the economy as a whole is being sidetracked or diverted underground. Reliance on coffee as prime export earner and the increasingly stringent measures being applied to control marketing of it is a desperate expedient, unlikely to produce lasting results. Freeing the coffee trade and permitting growers to maximize the return from their labor would bring better returns. The same formula would ensure development of other potential sources of agricultural exports as well as industrial products. Nevertheless, the economy still shows some signs of strength lacking in many other African countries. Fiscal management in Ethiopia has remained good and the foreign debt burden remains manageable--especially if, as most Ethiopians assume, the bill for Russian weapons will never need to be paid. The continued strength of the Ethiopian birr against other currencies--4.65 to one U.S. dollar was the prevalent unofficial rate this spring--highlights the sharp contrast between Ethiopia and countries such as Angola and Mozambique.

Ethiopia's greatest natural resource is its energetic and talented people whose aspirations have been raised by the revolutionary experience. They are ready to work hard for a better life. The more than 200,000 secondary school graduates taking the ESLC this year demonstrate the intensity of the drive for self-improvement that permeates the population. Everywhere I went during nearly two weeks of travel I was impressed by the crowds of healthy young people eager for contact with the outer world. Schooled, trained, given the opportunity to apply their knowledge to their own betterment by hard work, they can turn Ethiopia into a genuine African success story. This is the most basic dilemma Ethiopia's present leaders face: how to satisfy the aspirations they have whetted, how to give the near 1.5 million Ethiopians who come into the world every year real promise of a richer, more satisfying, and freer life. Ethiopians' aspirations for themselves are challenging but not contradictory. Their present leadership's policies and performance do not justify optimism that this challenge will be met.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0 100 200 miles
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International boundary
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National capital
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Railroad
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Adowa
Tigre
Makelle
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SUDAN
Begemder
Gondar
Lake Tana
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Dessie
Debra Marcos
Blue Nile
Awash
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ADDIS ABABA
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Arba Minch
Kebre Mengist
Gamu Gofa
Sidamo
Lake Rudolf
Moyale
Marsabit
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Assab
ADEN
F.T.A.I. (Fr.)
DJIBOUTI
Gulf of Aden
Berbera
Diredawa
Harar
Jijiga
Hargeisa
Hararge
Bale
Webe Shebelle
Belet Wein
Lugh Ganane
Giuba
SOMALIA
Indian Ocean
MOGADISCIO