# PEASANT ASSOCIATIONS AND COLLECTIVE AGRICULTURE IN ETHIOPIA: PROMISE AND PERFORMANCE*)

With 1 figure and 8 tables

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*Zusammenfassung:* Peasant Associations und kollektive Landwirtschaft in Äthiopien – Zielsetzung und Durchführung

Unter den gegenwärtig verbreiteten Entwicklungsmodellen erfährt die Kollektivierung in zahlreichen Ländern der Dritten Welt eine wachsende Beliebtheit als Strategie der sozialen und ökonomischen Entwicklung. In Äthiopien setzte die Provisorische Militärregierung (PMAC) nach der Revolution von 1974 eine grundlegende Agrarreform in Gang, um die Basis für ein weites Spektrum von sozial-politischen und ökonomischen Zielen zu schaffen, die von der Förderung der Eigenverantwortung *(self-reliance)* über die Teilnahme an Entscheidungen zur Steigerung der Nahrungsmittelproduktion bis zur sozialen Kontrolle über die Verteilung und Mobilisierung von Ressourcen reichen. Die Arbeit beginnt mit einer kurzen Darstellung der Entwicklung der Peasant Associations sowie der Aufgaben, die diese erfüllen bzw. erfüllen sollen. Darauf folgt eine eingehendere Analyse der verschiedenen Dimensionen der in Äthiopien eingeführten kollektiven Landbewirtschaftung, einschließlich der Gegensätze, die sich sowohl zwischen den individuellen und kollektiven Interessen als auch zwischen der zentralen Bürokratie und den lokalen Peasant Associations entwickelt haben. Die Arbeit beabsichtigt, sowohl Anregungen für die Weiterentwicklung von Konzepten und Theorien der partizipatorischen Organisation und der kollektiven Landbewirtschaftung zu geben als auch eine Erfahrungsgrundlage für die Durchführung von rationalen Entwicklungsmaßnahmen zu liefern.

It has commonly been assumed that land reform is exclusively a political, economic and social phenomenon. Consequently, while a wide historical and social science literature exists on the topic, thematic studies by geographers – with the exception of a few regional studies – of the development process, particularly those relating to land reform, have been conspicuously lacking.

Of recent time, however, the realization that land reform is also very much a spatial process has helped the geography of development to emerge as an important aspect of the current movement of the discipline towards greater social relevance. The present study is an attempt to add to the growing body of geographic literature on a topic that has so far been looked at only cursorily by geographers[1].

This paper highlights the various dilemmas and contradictions and the preconditions necessary for collective agriculture[2] to be an effective instrument for accelerated development. It is implicitly assumed here that participation as an active process, in which the peasants take initiatives and action on and exert control over a wide range of local affairs, is one of the essential conditions for the possible realization of collective agriculture[3]. This does not preclude, however, the possibility for the process of voluntary adoption of collective agriculture by the peasants to be steered by an external leadership by way of educative efforts, guidance, persuasion, designing special incentives, etc. But, it should not be "forced" by way of legislative compulsion or authoritarian direction.

The analysis in this paper is also concerned with the peasant responses and the contradictions generated at grassroot level as a result of initiatives undertaken by national leadership to transform the agrarian scene. The usual arguments put forward to support such initiatives are: (a) macroperceptions about the course of development under alterna-

*) This paper is largely based od two earlier studies: ALULA ABATE and TESFAYE TEKLU: Land Reform and Peasant Associations in Ethiopia: A Case Study of Two Widely Differing Regions. World Employment Programme Research Working Papers, ILO, Geneva, October, 1979; ALULA ABATE und FASSIL G. KIROS: Agrarian Reform, Structural Changes and Rural Development in Ethiopia. World Employment Programme Research Working Papers, ILO, Geneva, September, 1980.

1) Among the most important contributions by geographers are: A. MORI: "Riflessi geografici della riforma fondiaria". L'Universo, 37, 1957, Pp. 327–340. A. SERONDE: "La Reforme Agraire", in J. MAYRIAT (ed.), La Calabre (Colin, Paris), 1960, Pp. 85–136. D. A. HENDERSON: "Arid Lands under Agrarian Reform in North-West Mexico". Econ. Geog., 41, 1965, Pp. 300–312. H. MALEK: "Apres le reforme agraire iranienne". Ann. de Geog. 75, 1965, Pp. 268–285. C. BORCHERDT: "Städtewachstum und Agrarreform in Venezuela". Verh. des Deutschen Geographentages, 36, 1969, Pp. 187–195. J. FRIEDRICH: "Die Agrarreform in Mexico: Bedeutung und Verbreitung des Ejido-Systems in den wichtigsten Anbaugebieten des Landes". Nürnberger Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeographische Arbeiten, 7, 1968. H. HECKLAU: "Die ehemaligen White Highlands von Kenya". Die Erde, 99, 1968, Pp. 236–264. F. MONHEIM: "Agrarreform und Kolonisation in Peru und Bolivien". Beiträge zur Landeskunde von Peru und Bolivien, 1968, Steiner, Wiesbaden. R. KING: "Land Reform in Apulia-Lucania Molise". Norsk. geogr. Tidsskr., 24, 1970, Pp. 83–95.

2) The term collective agriculture is used here to denote all transitional forms of collective farming in a policy of full transition to collective ownership of the means of production.

3) In recent years, particularly since the beginning of the 1970s, international organizations, donor agencies and governments have shown increasing interest in promoting participatory development. Although no general agreement prevails on the specificities of the concept of participation, there is, however, a wide concensus about the need for popular participation. For a good discussion of the issues involved regarding participation in rural development see JOHN M. COHEN and NORMAN T. UPHOFF, " Participation's Place in Rural Development: Seeking Clarity Through Specificity", World Development, Vol. 8, 1980, Pp. 213–235.

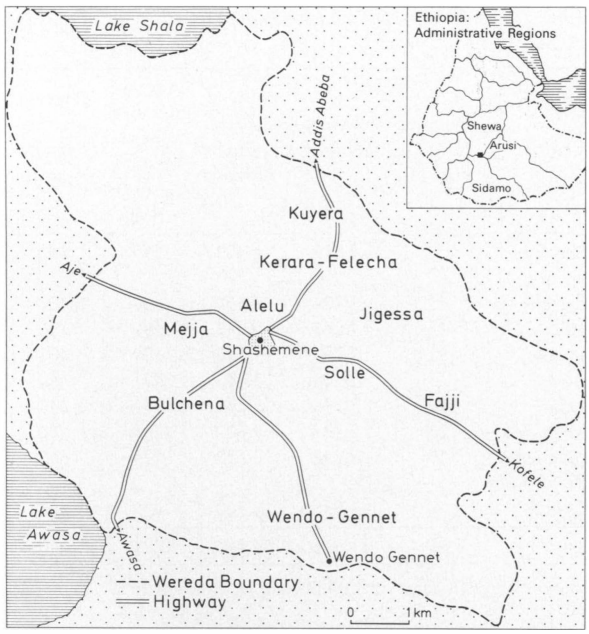


*Fig. 1:* Map of Shashemene Wereda

tive strategies which see the need for collective agriculture to avoid excessive economic and social differentiation that the pursuit of individual agriculture may generate; (b) the facilitation of the adoption of largescale technology for rapid agricultural growth in an egalitarian framework; (c) the promotion of the generation of agricultural surplus, and its use to meet the collective needs of the society; and (d) the furtherance of the ideological objective of overall social transformation. As the proclamations and directives amply testify, such macro-perceptions have emerged very gradually, and with no apparent consistency, from the concrete experience of exercising macro-responsibility. These perceptions are not usually shared by the masses of the peasantry, simply because they may not develop them easily. A "consiousness gap" is thereby created, which is the main problem in a participatory transition to collective agriculture that is centrally initiated. To understand some of the policy isues that exist in initiating and "steering" such a transition, the case of Shashemene *wereda* is briefly reviewed here, but examples from other areas will be drawn upon, as and when found appropriate.

Shashemene *wereda* ist located in the Lakes Region of the Ethiopian Rift Vally, some 250 kms. south of the capital, Addis Abeba. It is mostly made up of gently rolling plateau which reaches its highest elevation (about 2400 m.) in the East and West along the edges of the Rift Valley. Towards the North and South the elevation drops down to around 1400 m. at lakes Shala and Awasa. With an average annual precipitation of 900 mm. and 19 °C average annual temperature, the *wereda* is a fertile area suitable for largescale mechanized farming.

## The formation of Peasant Associations

*Preparation.* The *zemecha*[4] participants played a major role in the initial phase of the formation of Peasant Associations. Before the proclamation of the Land Reform Decree, they were already in the villages studying conditions of the peasantry and preparing them for the expected reform. The timing of the proclamation, at the start of the crop season of the region, and the need to pre-empt some social groups and classes from organizing themselves to form effective resistance, supplied the rationale for the speedy establishment of Peasant Associations. In less than three months after the proclamation, over three-fourths of the Peasant Associations in Shashemene *wereda* were organized. Their boundaries were delineated with the close collaboration of the local farmers and agricultural extension staff, in most cases following topographic feature – contour lines such as rivers, valleys and mountains – but with a certain degree of clan groupings and alignments incorporated.

The *zemecha* participants then registered those who met the state criteria for membership of Peasant Associations (tenants and hired agricultural workers who were over 18, ex-landowners who had below ten hectares of lands, and widowed or divorced females). The peasants then elected the executive committee and its officials, comprising a chairperson, secretary, treasurer and two assistants. Voting procedures included show of hands and acclamation, varying with the experience of the *zemecha* participants, and the apparent ignorance of the peasants of any pattern of election.

*Land distribution.* The generally unsettled situation in the country and the land reform being implemented just about the start of the planting season increased the fear that food crops would in fact fall short. So, some Peasant Associations pooled their labour and land and tilled collectively. In other cases the *zemecha* participants divided the Peasant Association into mutual aid groups which together tilled the land of each of the group members. A number of Peasant Associations permitted the farmers to till the land they possessed, but provided lands for the landless members. But some of the Peasant Associations decided on fullscale land redistribution, and established committees which in many cases completed the distribution within two months.

*Zemecha participants around Shashemene.* Not all *zemecha* participants were successful in their role of advisers to the Peasant Associations. In certain areas, instead of learning from the masses and understanding the specific conditions of the peasants, they developed an authoritarian attitude towards them, and interfered excessively in internal decisions. In Wendo Gennet, for instance, many of the big landowners, mainly non-Oromos, left the villages and

[4] The Amharic word *zemecha* is a common shorthand used to abbreviate the rather long title "Development Through Cooperation Campaign." Under this program, some sixty thousand university and highschool students and their teachers were sent out to the countryside to organize and teach peasants about the aims of the Ethiopian Revolution.

moved to major towns. On the pretext that landowners who moved to major towns were trying to reestablish their influence with the support of the local administration in Wendo Gennet, the *zemecha* participants with the farmers confiscated no less than seven grain mills, a small perfume plant, and a number of residential houses and warehouses. In Kuyera a group of 12 campaign participants, in close collaboration with the peasants, confiscated livestock and grain from the warehouses or grain mills, and disarmed the remaining landlords. The Red Guards and judicial committees were set up by the *zemecha* participants, who directly participated in deciding cases.

Using its armed forces stationed in Shashemene, the Government responded with action against the treat of anarchy. Thereafter, some of the *zemecha* participants abandoned their programmes, and the rest functioned only half-heartedly until the middle of 1976.

*Membership of Peasant Associations.* In the Shashmene area, by the end of May 1975, there were already 75 Peasant Associations, and in early September the figure reached 101. The bulk of registered members were tenants who constituted not less than 90% of the total members. The table 1 gives the distribution of the members by their prereform occupation.

Despite the legal provisions, some landowners of more than 10 hectares managed to join Peasant Associations in the first round of registration; their life style, treatment of tenants, or close clan affiliations with the peasants earned them preferential treatment for admission.

The number of hired agricultural workers who joined Peasant Associations was far less than expected in Shashemene: out of the total of hired labourers, 68% were found in three Peasant Associations only.

*Distribution of Peasant Associations, and its defects.* The tempo of the formation of the Associations, and the euphoria of the land-hungry peasants, did not permit the Associations to make a balanced distribution of population and area of land. Further, the Land Reform Proclamation granted possession rights over the land which the tenants held, and this indirectly restricted the mobility of the peasants. As a result, densely populated regions ended up with Peasant Associations with a large membership on a relatively small area of land.

Table 2 shows the consolidation of Peasant Associations by centre of establishment. The average membership per Peasant Association was 221 members, but the average number of members per Peasant Association varied from 130 to 485 among the nine centres. Similarly, the average area of land per Association varied from 400 to 840 hectares, with an overall average of 640 hectares.

*Table 1: Distribution of Peasant Association members by pre-land reform occupation*

| | Absolute | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Ex-landowners | 565 | 2.7 |
| Tenants | 19,974 | 94.4 |
| Hired agricultural workers | 490 | 2.3 |
| Non-farmers | 119 | 0.6 |

*Source: Wereda* Office of the Ministry of Land Reform

*Table 2: Distribution of peasants by size of membership and area of land (1978)*

| Centre | Number of Associations | Total members | Total area of land | Average members per Peasant Association | Average area per Peasant Association |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kuyera | 13 | 2,592 | 8,400 | 199 | 640 |
| Kerara | | | | | |
| Felecha | 11 | 1,424 | 4,552 | 130 | 400 |
| Solle | 14 | 4,063 | 9,940 | 290 | 720 |
| Jigessa | 11 | 2,294 | 4,520 | 209 | 400 |
| Alelu | 5 | 1,105 | 3,400 | 221 | 680 |
| Fajji | 16 | 3,378 | 13,340 | 211 | 840 |
| Mejja | 13 | 2,439 | 9,800 | 188 | 760 |
| Bulchena | 10 | 2,232 | 6,570 | 223 | 640 |
| Wendo | | | | | |
| Gennet | 4 | 1,939 | 2,960 | 485 | 760 |
| Total | 97 | 21,466 | 63,482 | 221 | 640 |

*Source: Wereda* Office of the Ministry of Land Reform

These Peasant Associations were recently reorganized, though incompletely, at the instigation of the *wereda* Revolutionary and Development Committee[5]. But the 1979 official *wereda* registers still reveal inequalitites of membership among Peasant Associations, though the latter number has been reduced from 101 to 81. The remaining inequality in landholdings, varying, for example, for a single member from 1/4 hectare to 2 hectares, also demands a continuous process of reorganizing the Peasant Associations, or a search for a rapid method of consolidating these small farms.

It appears, however, from the experience of the *wereda*, that a continuous process of reorganizing the Peasant Associations was not popular among the peasants. The agrarian reform did not destroy the values of loyalty to kinship and clan, and at times that loyalty impinged upon class solidarity. So, some Peasant Associations resisted boundary-line redefinition which might interfere with other clans; in some cases peasants formed Associations among their own clans, particulary in the Solle and Jigessa sub-districts[6]. A growing spirit of parochial communalism also acted against integration with other Peasant Associations. Moreover, not a few Peasant Association leaders misused their offices for aggrandizement of personal property and wealth, and opposed reorganization which would expose their misdeeds.

The formation of Peasant Associations in terms of demarcation of boundary lines, registration of members and

[5] Ethiopia, *Consolidation of Revolutionary and Development Committees*, Proclamation No. 115, 1977.

[6] A similar situation was observed in Dangela *wereda*, Gojjam Administrative Region. See ALULA ABATE and TESFAYE TEKLU, ibid.

election of executive committee members was successfully completed in Shashemene. Yet the peasants had a very narrow and short-sighted conception of the Peasant Association, not distinguished from their traditional communal institutions of the past. Many admitted that they participated in its formation only because the *zemecha* participants required them to do so, by imposing the concept of class struggle without raising the peasants' political consciousness or initiative. The continuous process of agrarian reform requires, as a prerequisite, major political work to promote the cultural level of the peasants in rural Shashemene.

*Higher representation.* The local-level Peasant Associations are represented by their delegates at the *wereda, awraja,* provincial and national levels, administratively linked to the state apparatus through the Revolutionary and Development Committees, which consist of peasants' representatives and the delegates from the various organs of state aparatus and mass organizations.

Though not represented in proportion to their numbers, the peasants, nonetheless, do participate in the local level administrative machinery of the state. The lowest administrative organ of the state, a Peasant Association, is expected to coordinate administrative functions, agitate and mobilize the people to participate in political and economic activities, and maintain the security of the region. However, because of their "appendage" status, their participation in decision-making and implementation of administrative decisions is nominal.

*Changes in leadership.* In the five years since the land reform, there have been relatively frequent changes in the leadership among the Peasant Associations. Although some leaders voluntarily resigned for various personal reasons, the majority of them, however, were dismissed as was the case when in 1978 a major campaign was conducted in the *wereda* by the Revolutionary and Development Committee resulting in a complete overhaul of Peasant Association leaders there[7]. In most cases the peasants did not take the initiative to get rid of corrupt or inefficient leaders; there was a general misconception that a person once elected and authorized by the Government could not be removed without government endorsement, and, in some cases, reluctance to violate kinship and clan values.

*Decision-making in Peasant Associations.* Among the major topics discussed and decided by the general assembly of a Peasant Association are the proportion of lands to be allotted by size of family, organizational mechanism for distributing land, and examining applications for membership of the Association, together with the size and source of the land to be allotted to the new members, if accepted. The executive committee often proposes the pattern of utilization of the communal farm: type of crops, dates and organization of labour, use of proceeds, and measures to take against absentees. The proposals are in most cases agreed to by the general assembly, after discussion.

The frequency of the meetings in a peak farming season depends on the gravity of the issues on the agenda; otherwise, meetings take place regularly. Urgent or trivial ussues are often dealt with in the communal fields at the end of the day's work.

*Economic participation in Peasant Associations: Private small-holdings.* There are two forms of farm organization which grow in parallel in Shashemene: private small-holdings and communal farms.

Communal farming existed in the past in a different socio-economic context, but was revitalized with different objectives in 1975. But the immediate impact of the land reform was the distribution of land as private small-holdings, which still account for a large proportion of land in the *wereda,* as shown in table 3.

*Table 3: Ratio of communal farmland (C) to privately cultivated farmland (P): Percentage distribution of Peasant Associations*

| C/P | 1975 (%) | 1976 (%) | 1977 (%) | 1978 (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.01–0.04 | 26 | 21 | 40 | 35 |
| 0.05–0.09 | 30 | 33 | 40 | 47 |
| 0.10–0.14 | 16 | 28 | 15 | 18 |
| 0.15–0.19 | 16 | 13 | 5 | – |
| 0.25–1.4 | 12 | 5 | – | – |

In 1975 and 1976, the expansion of communal farming was spectacular. But immediately after the departure of the *zemecha* participants, communal farms abruptly declined in size, and, after 1976, as may be observed in table 3, some Peasant Associations completely abandoned them.

In 1975, only a small number of Peasant Associations attempted to undertake major land redistribution. Partly because the Proclamation on Rural Land Ownership coincided with the beginning of the crop year, and partly because of poor organization of labour on the communal farms, limited to household heads, most Peasant Associations suffered from low yields. The division of output in proportion to man-days worked by household heads only adversely affected those with large families. Some farmers failed even to provide food for their families, and were forced to sell their livestock. Based on this experience, the majority of Peasant Associations decided in 1976 to have their own private plots and to allot communal farms separately.

The dominant patterns in land distribution were to fix the area of land in accordance with size of family, explore the land available for distribution (i. e., land owned above the fixed area and land confiscated from ex-landlords), and list members of the Association who had no land, or an area

7) A study conducted in mid-1979 to assess the rate of turnover in leadership in a sample of 34 Peasant Associations over the previous five years has shown that often leadership has changed three times, and in a few cases even four times. A note presented by the *wereda* Extension Project Implementation Department (EPID) discussion forum raises the problem of leadership among the peasants and summarizes the major charges leveled against the previous leaders. See petition addressed to *Shashemene Wereda Revolutionary and Development Committee* by EPID Discussion Forum (ref. No. 6/1970 E.C.).

below the fixed size[8]). Excess and unoccupied land was then distributed. In all Peasant Associations, the most important factor was the size of family, to which the size of an individual holding was made directly proportional. But the area of a holding is a function of the total area of cultivable land and the number of the Association's members, and this led inevitably to uneven distribution among the farm population in the *wereda* as a whole.

The technical and organizational prerequisites for a fully viable scheme of land distribution were missing. Even the basic criteria, the size of family, unduly emphasized the consumption units of a household rather than their productive capacity, dependent to a large extent on working age. A family with a relatively large number of members of working age might have insufficient land to utilize the family labour; a family of the same size might include only a small number of economically active participants. The growing demand for membership of a Peasant Association as soon as a family member reaches 18 years, and the increasing rate of marriage, are results of shortage of land among the peasants.

This form of land distribution does not alter the structure of a natural village community. The farmer remains in possession of his land if it is within the size-limit set by the Association; if it is in excess, that excess will be given to members who are short of land but live in the same neighbourhood. Members who have never possessed land in the Association generally receive it from those areas which were confiscated and/or abandoned for a long time to pasture or forest. The quality of land is rarely considered. One Peasant Association (Tekur Weha, located south of Shashemene near Sidamo Administrative Region) distributed 50% of land considered non-fertile among no less than 100 members who were unemployed casual laborers in the nearby town; as a result a good number of the new members abandoned the Association. Further, a majority of Peasant Associations failed accurately to estimate the land available for partition, and some members were therefore forced to take land which was barren and non-fertile.

The Associations have to keep revising the size of holdings to accommodate those who failed to get their legitimate share of land; to accomodate new members (often children of the members of the Association); and to adjust plots where a family has increased (often in the practice of polygamous marriage). In the last few years, many Peasant Associations have broken up the communal farms to provide land for additional needs.

The speed at which the first round of land distribution in 1975 was completed, generally in not more than two months, and compounded almost invariably with poor technical knowledge and sometimes with the corruption of committee members, provided a poor base for equality of land holdings. The concern about the possibility of increasing differentiation, which is obviously inimical to the progress of agrarian reform, partly explains the Government's concerted campaign to promote collective agriculture.

*Table 4: Percentage distribution of Peasant Associations by size of communal farmland*

| Size of land (ha.) | 1975 | 1976 | 1977 | 1978 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Less than 40 | 36 | 27 | 74 | 88 |
| 40–80 | 37 | 44 | 26 | 12 |
| 80–320 | 27 | 29 | – | – |

*Communal farms.* The *zemecha* participants who promoted the communal farms ordered some Peasant Associations to give not more than a hectare to each member, ignoring the government directive of the maximum ceiling of 10 hectares, and setting the rest of the land aside for a variety of forms of communal farm. Every Peasant Association had such a farm in 1975, operated under the close supervision of the campaign participants. But, in time the area of communal farms dwindled (table 4), and in some Associations they were abandoned.

Some reasons for the decline of communal farms have been the need for more land for private plots, and the bitter experience of registered household heads with regard to poor organization, onerous deductions of output, and lack of agricultural inputs for large-scale cultivation. Communal farms were often situated on the border of an Association's area, and subject to pressure from neighbouring Peasant Associations. Others were located on swampy marshlands, in places infested by wild animals, and generally in areas which are considered not suitable for personal plots. There are a few exceptional Peasant Associations which include fertile and consolidated communal farms. But the general picture of the communal farms of the *wereda* is that they are fragmented, located on less fertile land, and in areas vulnerable to external and uncontrollable factors.

*Crops and yields.* The cropping pattern of communal farms is not significantly different from that of the private plots: they are both oriented to the production of staple crops – maize followed by barley and *teff (Eragrostis tef)*.

In the absence of a land utilization policy, the decisions as to what crops to grow on the communal farms are influenced solely by the interests and experiences of the farmers. Most Peasant Associations complain that they cannot grow crops of high value, like *teff*, on communal land, because large-scale farming without a corresponding level of technology is impossible with certain crops. The data available on average yields of communal farms are incomplete and unreliable, but ample reasons are given in the following section for the conclusion that yields are often lower than on private farms.

*Division of labour.* All registered household heads in a Peasant Association must participate in communal farm work, with some exceptions made on grounds of, for example, physical incapacity. Where there is a single communal farm, all members of the Association constitute a single production team, and work collectively in the field. Where there is more than one communal farm, the members are divided in accordance with the number of farms. The execu-

[8]) The process of land distribution and the different sets of problems encountered in the South (Shashemene *Wereda)* and in the North (Dangella *Wereda*) is described at length by Alula Abate and Tesfaye Teklu, ibid.

*Table 5: Percentage of land under different crops on communal farms (1975 and 1976) and on family holdings (1976)*

| Crop type | Area of cropped land (on communal farms) | | Area of cropped land (on private holdings) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1975 | 1976 | 1976 |
| CEREALS | 87.1 | 71.4 | 83.1 |
| Maize | 59.1 | 48.7 | 69.2 |
| Teff | 4.8 | 5.5 | 3.2 |
| Wheat | 11.5 | 13.1 | 2.9 |
| Barley | 10.5 | 1.1 | 3.6 |
| Sorghum | 0.6 | 3.0 | 0.2 |
| PULSES | 12.6 | 28.0 | 7.7 |
| Haricot beans | 9.4 | 20.2 | 6.3 |
| Horse beans | 2.1 | 4.4 | 0.9 |
| Field peas | 1.1 | 4.0 | 0.5 |
| TUBERS | 0.3 | – | – |
| Potatoes | 0.3 | – | – |

tive committee members supervise the members' participation but are themselves rarely actively involved in their activities. Women are involved in harrowing, weeding, harvesting and transporting the produce from the fields. Among the males, those who own oxen undertake the ploughing, the rest do the harrowing. Otherwise, there is no distinct division of work among the members.

Duration of work and intensity of individual participation of course varies considerably among the members. In the absence of a proper record of roll calls, fragmentary data indicate that in the crop years 1978 and 1979 the rate of absenteeism reached 40% of economically active household heads. Executive committees adopt various measures ranging from warning to imprisonment, but the general level of participation continues to fall in several Peasant Associations.

Apart from the absenteeism, as the size of the communal farms varies inversely with the number of members in a Peasant Association, the duration of work per member drops throughout. The pattern of share of land per participant is shown in table 6.

*Distribution of proceeds.* At the end of the crop year, the general assembly of a Peasant Association sets the formula for the distribution of proceeds. If a stable crop like maize was grown, it is often shared among the members. Pulse crops are sold, and the cash is shared after obligations to the government are met. Common procedures of distribution are (i) the rental rate for oxen is set; (ii) the proportion of the gross output due to a member who has a complete attendance is determined; and (iii) the penalty fees for absentees are decided upon, deductable from their respective share. But in some Peasant Associations the system of remuneration is not based on time-work rate; instead, all members are entitled to an equal share, irrespective of the contribution of farm implements or participation in field activities.

A few Peasant Associations are reported to have an investment fund, and several have a reserve fund to meet expenses for running costs for seeds and fertilizers, tax and other administrative outlays. These payments are, however, considered only after the wage payment to farmers, who are more concerned with their individual share than with using proceeds for the expansion of rural projects.

As with land, the variation in family size and the capacity for work have a direct impact on individual earnings, and of course any maldistribution practiced by the leaders further exacerbates the situation. The structure of property ownerships, the system of remuneration and the level of political consciousness of the small farmers militate against a more equitable distribution of income within the Peasant Associations.

*Table 6: Percentage distribution of communal farms by hectares of communal land for household heads*

| Hectare for household heads | 1975 | 1976 | 1977 | 1978 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.01–0.10 | 10 | 25 | 57 | 60 |
| 0.11–0.20 | 20 | 36 | 35 | 25 |
| 0.21–0.30 | 20 | 22 | 4 | 10 |
| 0.31–0.40 | 27 | 17 | 4 | 5 |
| 0.41–2.00 | 23 | – | – | – |
| Average ha/ household head | 0.31 ha/ person | 0.16 ha/ person | 0.09 ha/ person | 0.10 ha/ person |

## The Peasant Associations as transitional institutions

The process of organizing Peasant Associations (and for that matter the implementation of the land reform) was not carried out evenly throughout the country, because of differences in the traditional land-holding systems, the revolutionary struggles, and the war situation that prevailed in many parts of the country following the agrarian reform proclamation. On the whole, progress in the establishment of Peasant Associations was relatively rapid in those areas of southern and south-western Ethiopia where tenancy and absentee landlordism had dominated. In the northern areas, where the *rist*[9] system predominated, peasants reacted with little enthusiasm and even opposed the land reform.

The agrarian structure in the North placed singular constraints on the implementation of the policy laid down by the Government – a policy which had met with considerable success in the South. It was easier to isolate the landed elite in the South, for many of them were either northerners with large estates, or indigenous persons living in towns, whereas, in the North, class differentiation was less pronounced, and at the same time the landlords could resists far more effec-

[9] *Rist* refers to a system of land tenure that was prevalent in many areas in Northern Ethiopia. It is basically a land-use right to a portion of a corporately held land by the descendants of a common ancestor. For a detailed study of this tenure system see ALLAN HOBEN: "Land Tenure Among the Amhara of Ethiopia", University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1973.

*Table 7: Number of Peasant Associations and their membership*

| Administrative region[a] | Number of Peasant Associations[b] | Number of members (household heads)[c] |
|---|---|---|
| Illubabor | 980 | 198,546 |
| Eritrea | 281 | 60,750 |
| Keffa | 1,645 | 535,474 |
| Wello | 1,703 | 1,022,482 |
| Wellega | 2,210 | 449,792 |
| Gamo Gofa | 777 | 211,976 |
| Gondar | 1,137 | 427,209 |
| Gojjam | 1,920 | 456,242 |
| Arusi | 1,119 | 290,000 |
| Harerghe | 1,608 | 420, 957 |
| Sidamo | 1,482 | 601,043 |
| Shewa | 6,044 | 1,703,662 |
| Bale | 696 | 170,000 |
| Tigrai | 1,064 | 499,076 |
| Total | 22,666 | 7,047,209 |

*Notes:* a) Table excludes over 200 settlements.
b) The number of Peasant Associations has been reduced due to consolidations.
c) The number of members appear to be overestimated.
*Source:* *KeYekatit Iske Yekatit*, Report of the Ministry of Agriculture, 1980 (1972 E. C.)

tively what they considered as encroachment by the Government on their political "clientele".

As of early 1980, there were nearly 23,000 Peasant Associations reported as established throughout the country, including an estimated total membership of over 7 million household heads (table 7):

It must be remembered that the Peasant Associations came into being as a result of external impetus; they were mass organizations formed very rapidly while the revolution was yet in a very early stage, and they had to face many problems resulting from the very low level of administrative capacity even to manage their day-to-day affairs, let alone fully to realize the range of economic, social and political objectives with which they were charged.

The Peasant Associations are not politically regarded as permanent institutions: even though the All-Ethiopia Peasant Association has now come into being, the institution of the Peasant Association itself is, as we shall see below, a transitional development in the process of the long-term institutional transformation envisaged in Ethiopia.

*The Service Cooperatives.* An important institutional development in rural Ethiopia, allied with the development of Peasant Associations, has been the rapid expansion of service cooperatives. *The Proclamation to provide for the Organization and Consolidation of Peasant Associations*[10] provided that Service Cooperatives be formed with specific objectives and duties by no less than three and not more than ten Peasant Associations. To a small degree, Peasant Associations have utilized the formation of service cooperatives to increase their bargaining power in purchasing and selling goods.

It was estimated that nearly 3,000 Service Cooperatives, representing over 15,000 Peasant Associations, were formed as of early 1980. Nearly 90% of the members of Peasant Associations benefit from the services of the Cooperatives, whose estimated total capital of about U.S. $ 14 million was contributed largely by the peasantry[11].

Most of the Service Cooperatives have given priority to the establishment of cooperative shops, and have not yet been in a position to fulfil the other economic functions adequately. The shops are established to make available to the peasantry essentials such as cooking-oil, sugar, salt, matches, and to some extent clothing, footwear and agricultural implements.

As might be expected, the Service Cooperatives have also had problems of institutional development to face. Their activities require planning and financial organization for which they are not yet adequately equipped. Given the general lack of writing skill or simple accounting procedures, and the prevalance of bribery previous to the revolution, it is not surprising that accounts of corruption among PA and service cooperative leaders are numerous[12]. Despite their present shortcomings, the fact that they have been establised throughout rural Ethiopia, and the fact too that they are managed by the peasantry, constitute significant developments. And, as we shall see below, the Service Cooperatives like the Peasant Associations, are intended to form an important link in the future institutional development envisaged by the Government.

*The Producers' Cooperatives.* The establishment of Producers' Cooperatives was envisioned by the 1975 *Peasant Associations Consolidation Proclamation.* The organization and stage-by-stage development of such institutions was fully elaborated in the 1979 Directives on agricultural Pruducers' Cooperatives[13].

According to the directives, the initial step is the establishment of the type of cooperative referred to as *malba* (Elementary Producers' Cooperative). Their basic requirement for the establishment of the *malba* is the transfer of private holdings of land to communal holding, leaving plots of up to one-fifth of a hectare for individual cultivation. Draft animals and implements are to remain private property in this stage, for the use of which the cooperative would pay rent to the owners.

The stage of *welba* (Advanced Producers' Cooperative) is reached when all land becomes communal holding and when all draft animals and implements are transferred to the cooperative. Land for individual cultivation of up to one-

10) Ethiopia, *Peasant Association Organizations and Consolidation Proclamation,* No. 71, 1975.

11) *Yekatit Iske Yekatit,* Report of the Ministry of Agriculture, 1980 (1972 E.C.).

12) Administrative and financial mismanagement in rural cooperatives appears to be a recognized problem in many African countries. See GORAN HYDEN: "Can Co-ops Make it in Africa". Africa Report, XV, 9, Dec. 1970, Pp. 12–15.

13) Ethiopia, *Directives on Agricultural Producers' Cooperatives,* June, 1979.

*Table 8: Agricultural Producers' Cooperatives up to January 1981*

| No. | Administrative region | Producers' Cooperatives | Stage of development | | Number of members | Size of land (ha.) | Number of oxen | Number of tractors | Legally registered |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Melba | Melba | | | | | |
| 1 | Tigrai | 7 | 7[x)] | – | 323 | 391 | 150 | – | – |
| 2 | Wello | 40 | 29 | 11 | 4,090 | 5,692.45 | 2,114 | 4 | 2 |
| 3 | Hararghe | 63 | 18 | 45 | 3,135 | 4,750.60 | 2,467 | 3 | – |
| 4 | Sidamo | 22 | 22 | – | 4,806 | 8,441 | 355 | – | 2 |
| 5 | Keffa | 22 | 21 | 1 | 1,174 | 2,355 | 589 | – | 1 |
| 6 | Gamo Gofa | 7 | 5 | 2 | 2,871 | 3,249 | 1,286 | 2 | 2 |
| 7 | Arusi | 47 | 25 | 22 | 2,228 | 6,621.52 | 2,686 | 5[y)] | 1 |
| 8 | Gondar | 30 | 28 | 2 | 1,707 | 5,575.82 | 2,701 | 1 | 3 |
| 9 | Wellega | 76 | 64 | 12 | 6,973 | 16,978.59 | 6,485 | – | 7 |
| 10 | Illubabor | 54 | 45 | 9 | 3,497 | 9,285.50 | 2,089 | – | 3 |
| 11 | Gojjam | 33 | 22 | 11 | 1,067 | 3,847.13 | 1,102 | 3 | 4 |
| 12 | Shewa | 80 | 61 | 19 | 6,217 | 14,675 | 3,486 | 8 | 6 |
| 13 | Bale | 64 | 49 | 15 | 4,445 | 4,475 | 3,531 | 2 | – |
| Total | | 545 | 396 | 149 | 43,533 | 86,337.61 | 29,041 | 28 | 31 |

*Source:* Ministry of Agriculture

*Notes:* [x)] Initial stage, [y)] Property of the Kebiles

tenth of a hectare would, however, be permitted; compensation is to be paid by the cooperative for all draft animals and implements that become communal property.

All members of a Peasant Association, or a minimum of 30 of them, may initiate a *malba*, or they may directly establish a *welba*.

The Service Cooperatives discussed above are to become "Associations of Producers' Cooperatives" (instead of "Associations of Peasant Associations"), when most of the peasantry belonging to the member Peasant Associations become members of Producers Cooperatives. The functions of the new associations are to be similar to those of the institutions that they succeed. They also become the basis for yet another level of institutional development. Thus, the place that Service Cooperatives are expected to occupy in the process of rural institutional change is unique in Ethiopia[14)].

At a later stage of development, several *welba* already associated through the Association of Producers' Cooperatives may become united to form a new body named *weland*, with an average land-holding of 4,000 hectares and a membership of 2,500 peasants. Each *welba*, by this time including all Peasant Association members, is to be designated as a habre or brigade, united under a *weland*. The latter stage marks a high level of institutional and technological development.

Thus, the Service Cooperatives of today are to be gradually transformed into a kind of "commune" *(weland)*, and the present-day Peasant Associations are to be converted into their brigades *(habres)*.

A total of 545 Producers' Cooperatives are today in various stages of development in rural Ethiopia (table 8). Out of these, 149 are already *welba*, and 386 are *malba*. While these figures refer only to those cooperatives that have been legally registered, the number of cooperatives actually in existence and being experimented with is very much higher. It must be noted that many of the Producers' Cooperatives were already in existence prior to the pronouncement of the *Directives*, but were then, and continue to be, in a process of reorganization in accordance with the new provisions. Furthermore, not all of them are peasants' Producers' Cooperatives; many are cooperatives of former agricultural workers, or of the urban unemployed, or other interested groups.

The *Directives* provide built-in mechanisms for encouraging the development of Producers' Cooperatives. For example, when a Producers' Cooperative comes into being within a Peasant Association area, the key leadership posts of the association are to be held by persons elected from among the members of the cooperative. It is also stated in the *Directives* that all communal property, such as grazing and wood lands, enterprises and other fixed property are to be transferred from the Peasant Association to the cooperative. Furthermore, Service Cooperatives are required to provide loans of 25% of their surplus to Producers' Cooperatives established in their area, and to give priority to meeting the needs of the cooperatives for agriculture inputs such as fertilizer. It can be inferred from these provisions that the relatively rapid development of Producers' Cooperatives is intended.

## Ethiopian cooperatives and rural development

It is evident that any attempt which tries to freeze in time a revolutionary process that is still unfolding is full of the dangers of being overtaken by events. Furthermore, the time

[14)] For a distinction between the roles of Sevice Cooperatives, see MD. ANISUR RAHMAN: Transition to Collective Agriculture and Peasant Participation: North Vietnam, Tanzania and Ethiopia, WEP/10/WP9, ILO, Geneva, January 1980.

since the land reform was implemented and the formation of the Peasant Associations is quite short, rendering the undertaking of a thorough evaluation of them a heroic attempt. Perhaps another decade must pass before the full results can properly be judged. Yet, it is believed that even at this preliminary stage some evaluatory work may not be untimely, particularly as the Government has attached special importance to cooperatives. Some preliminary studies and interactions with peasants has enabled us to monitor, albeit tentatively, the process that has unfolded so far. It is on the basis of these preliminary observations that an attempt is made here to identify some critical isues and the kinds of questions that should be asked in the coming years.

The land reform and the formation of PA's have resulted in a fundamental re-organization of socio-economic structures in favour of small-scale peasant agriculture. This action has been justified as being necessary to achieve two social policy goals: (i) the social and economic benefits resulting from the redistribution and re-organization of the means of production, and (ii) the removal of structural impediments restricting the growth of agricultural production. While the land reform has had important redistributive benefits, there is little evidence that real production of agricultural or handicrafts items has been substantially increased. The second social objective, that of removing structural logjams restricting economic growth and development, is more complex and intractable.

Far-reaching structural changes, such as agrarian reform and popular participation in developmental decision-making are often considered to be preconditions to implement a socialist development strategy. In spite of its radical challenge to more accomodating approaches, this style of development, in light of recent experiences from some other developing countries, carries an element of ambiguity when put in practice. The nature of the catalytic force enabling the masses to change from objects of exploitation into creative participants in control of their own destiny remains obscure.

Despite the formation of PAs, hierarchically all the way up from the *wereda* to the national level, the individual PA is to a large measure still localized and atomized, insuring that it would remain subordinate and secondary – an appendage of the state bureaucracy. As mass organizations, they stand apart from the governmental administrative apparatus, and they have yet to be integrated into the national planning and policy-making system.

Rural people and their resources could be mobilized only through strong, self-managed, self-supporting local institutions. However, there is an apparent major dilemma which needs to be resolved. Left to their own devices, the peasants, in the early post-distribution situation, are particularly vulnerable to alienation from socialist aims, being unable effectively to mobilize themselves without outside support, or, often, without outside leadership. The problem is how to effectively control and direct from above without stifling mass initiative and self-reliance in local matters from below. There is clearly a need to stimulate a change from within peasant mentality and attitudes in order to bring about democratic participation at every level. This should not, however, be taken to mean "over-assistance" or "over-steering."

The expectation in 1975 that, as farmers gained experience and collective benefits from communal farms, they would turn to collective farms was demonstrated as ill-founded by the experiences of the last few years. The peasants looked forward to becoming at least masters of their fate, and to tilling the land as individual proprietors with little or no interference. They might be willing to allot some role in the future social order to the communal farm, or to other organizations of a cooperative nature, but in their view the basic unit of production was to be the small family farm. This attitude is not exclusive to Ethiopian peasants, as the experience from other countries indicate that its occurrance is quite widespread.

Peasant farming is often viewed as an insurmountable stumbling-block to be avoided at all costs in the period of transition. But, initially, this need not be the case, so long as relevant measures are taken against the forces of class differentiation which are likely to create renewed inequalitites among the peasantry. The experience of other socialist countries has taught two important lessons: that collective agriculture by and in itself is not a sufficient defining characteristic of socialism, and that the "individualist" stage can realistically be skipped in favour of collectivisation only in the case of a relatively advanced form of agriculture[15].

An important concern and a lesson at the same time is the curious lack of understanding on the part of the leadership of the peasant's mentality and in particular their attitude to the land. Despite the Government's stated policy of adhering to the principle of voluntariness and evolutionary transition to collective agriculture, the information at had suggests that the pace of collectivization is being forced at the local level, a situation which may actually endanger the future prospects of a transition to socialism. The capacity to inspire a predominantly rural population to become creative participants does not seem to be much in evidence, and voluntarastic mobilization appears to be easily slipping into bureaucratic compulsion in the areas studied.

The approach so far adopted is in permanent danger of becoming ridden by theory, selecting or interpreting facts to fit the theory, and universalizing phenomena that are often local. Serious corrective policy and action are called for. But such policy and action have to be context-specific, and for this a great deal of research is needed to understand the many dimensions of the problem. In this regard, it is worthwhile to discard some of the romantic notions, and at the very least entertain the proposition that socialist agriculture can have as many problems as, or even more problems than, capitalist agriculture.

As yet, it cannot be claimed that rural cooperatives have succeeded widely and substantially, in performing the productive (with regard to market prices) function. No doubt

[15] David Lehmann, (ed.): Agrarian Reform and Agrarian Reformism: Studies of Peru, Chile, China and India, London, Faber and Faber, Ltd. 1974, P. 22.

there are islands of success; but, on the whole, rural areas are not being transformed by cooperatives, nor should they be expected to. A gestation period – which may be long or short depending on local conditions, – is necessary for all concerned, in order for the means of production, among other things, to develop sufficiently. Otherwise, the grouping together of a mass of peasants working the land with primitive tools will have little meaningful impact. To make sense of cooperatives, and to influence them towards development, are two aims that call for an exceptional combination of audacity and humility.

The problems raised so far should not be taken to mean that fundamental changes have not taken place in the social order of the country. To be sure, some of these problems – and possibly many more – will continue to plague the country for some time to come. The real issue, however, is the strategy to be adopted now so that, in the longer term, an independent development effort, which takes into account the material conditions and imperatives of the country, can be launched on a solid economic and social foundation.

The conscious efforts to provide social services, particularly the campaign to spread literacy in the rural areas, and the creation of a national framework within which economic, social, cultural and other development plans are implemented are undoubtedly the major achievments. While it is a rare attempt to create a national ethic in which the notion of human equality is taken more seriously, the ideology of egalitarianism should not be mistaken for exaltation of poverty. The Ethiopian experiment also provides other developing countries a unique study of the practical problems which defy often than not the application of ready-made formulas.

The coming decade will tell us whether some of the actions taken were realistic, or merely, in the words of Samuel Johnson, an example of the triumph of hope over experience.

# DIE KOLONIALENTWICKLUNG DES DEUTSCHEN SCHUTZGEBIETES TOGO IN RÄUMLICHER PERSPEKTIVE

Mit 4 Abbildungen und 4 Tabellen

LEO DE HAAN

*Summary:* The colonial development of the German protectorat of Togo in a spatial perspective

This article deals with the spatial effects of German colonial penetration in Togo from 1884 until 1914. Among other spatial processes such as urbanization, the extension of commercial agricultural production, and migration, special attention is paid to the development of infrastructure and transportation. It is argued that the spatial effects of colonialism cannot be fully understood without special reference to the pre-colonial spatial structure. Pre-colonial Togo was part of two distinct trading networks, i.e. the Hausa-trade in the North and the Atlantic trade in the South. Even before modern infrastructure had been established German colonial penetration succeeded in extending the Atlantic trading network further north. This process of spatial integration was accelerated by the introduction of modern infrastructure such as railroads. However, the spatial expansion of the colonial economy partly followed established pre-colonial lines, although some important modifications occured notably in the gravity centre of commercial agricultural production, urbanization, port concentration and infrastructure. At the end of the German era the South had been strongly integrated into the colonial system. The pre-colonial east-west integration of the peripheral North had been weakened by an integration with the South.

In diesem Artikel wird zu erörtern sein, auf welche Weise die kolonialräumliche Struktur des deutschen Schutzgebietes Togo zustande gekommen ist, weil die Entwicklungen in dieser Periode von Togos Geschichte die räumliche Struktur Togos bis nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg bestimmt haben (AMIN 1973, 99 u. 101). Insbesondere soll ein wichtiges Element in dieser Struktur betrachtet werden: die Entwicklung der Infrastruktur. Dabei wird untersucht, inwieweit existierende Konzepte der Transportentwicklung die Entwicklungen in Togo erklären können.

In einem Modell des Verkehrsausbaus in unterentwickelten Ländern, namentlich auf Ghana und Nigeria ausgerichtet, führen TAAFFE, MORILL und GOULD (1963) uns eine idealtypische Aufeinanderfolge von Phasen vor. Ausgangspunkt (Phase 1) ist eine Situation gleichwertiger Handelsorte an der Küste mit kurzen Erschließungslinien ohne Querverbindungen in einem undifferenzierten Hinterland. In der 2. Phase dringen einige Erschließungslinien tiefer ins Hinterland ein. Damit gehen ein Wachsen der Hafenorte und die Entstehung von Zentren im Hinterland einher. In der 3. Phase entwickeln sich *feederroads* (Zubringerstraßen) von den Zentren an den Erschließungslinien aus. Hierdurch wird das Hinterland kleinerer Hafenorte angebunden, so daß eine Vergrößerung großer Hafenorte auf Kosten der kleineren erfolgt. In der 4. Phase sind die Zentren an der Erschließungslinie weiter angewachsen, und es kommen die ersten Querverbindungen zwischen den Erschließungslinien zustande. In der 5. Phase werden diese Querverbindungen ausgedehnt. Die Phase 6 ist der Anfang einer Wiederholung des Konzentrationsprozesses auf einem höheren