FSS Discussion Paper No. 11

RESETTLEMENT IN ETHIOPIA

The Tragedy of Population Relocation in the 1980s

Dessalegn Rahmato
Forum for Social Studies

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Acronyms

AVA:	Awash Valley Authority
CSA:	Central Statistical Authority.
CRDA:	Christian Relief and Development Association.
ESP:	Ethiopian Serategnoch Party
FAO:	Food and Agricultural Organization.
IAR:	Institute of Agricultural Research
IBRD:	International Bank for Reconstruction & Development
IDR:	Institute of Development Research (Addis Ababa University).
IEG:	Imperial Ethiopian Government.
ILCA:	International Livestock Centre for Africa.
ILO:	International Labour Office.
MoA(S):	Ministry of Agriculture (and Settlement).
MLRA:	Ministry of Land Reform and Administration.
MNCD:	Ministry of National Community Development.
NRPC-CPSC:	National Revolutionary Production Campaign-Central Planning Supreme Council.
ONCCP:	Office of the National Committee for Central Planning.
OPHCS:	Office of the Population and Housing Census Commission.
PCO:	Planning Commission Office.
PEEM:	Panel of Experts on Environmental Management.
PMAC:	Provisional Military Administrative Council.
RPONE:	Regional Planning Office for Northeast Ethiopia.
RPOWE:	Regional Planning Office for Western Ethiopia.
RRC:	Relief and Rehabilitation Commission.
SA:	Settlement Authority
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme.
WFP:	World Food Programme.

Glossary

***Awraja*, *Woreda*:** Until recently, the country's three tier administrative structure consisted of the woreda, the lowest unit, the *awraja* (which is made up of several *woredas*), and the province, containing several *awrajas*.

***Birr*:** the Ethiopian currency. In the 1980s, 1 USD equaled 2.07 Birr

Hectare (Ha.): 1 hectare equals 2.5 acres.

Quintals(qn.): 10 qn. equals 1 ton.

RESETTLEMENT IN ETHIOPIA
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Dessalegn Rahmato

Abstract

This paper was written and delivered at a public conference in 1989, at a time when the Derg's massive programme of emergency resettlement was in full swing with disastrous consequences. It is being republished now at a time when the present government is embarked on a resettlement programme in response to the food crisis gripping the rural areas. It is hoped that it will stimulate informed debate on resettlement in general and the terrible experiences of the 1980s in particular.

This country has a resettlement experience going back to the 1960s, but we do not seem to have drawn the appropriate lessons from this extensive experience. Resettlement is a complex and costly undertaking, and without careful planning, a sound assessment of the land and other resources available for settlement, and the close involvement of the beneficiaries themselves in both endeavours, the chances of success are very minimal. The international experience shows that out of the hundreds of settlement programmes undertaken in Africa, Asia and Latin America in the decades since the 1960s, only a handful have been judged to be successful.

Resettlement under the Derg had multiple objectives: it was meant to promote food security, to relieve the population pressure of the vulnerable areas, and to bring about the environmental rehabilitation of these same areas. In the end none of these objectives were achieved and yet the cost in human lives and resources was immense. In the period 1984-1986, the Derg resettled some 600,000 people, most of whom were from the northern highlands; the areas of settlement were for the most part the lowlands of western Ethiopia. In this same period, some 33,000 settlers lost their lives due to disease, hunger and exhaustion. An untold

number of families were destroyed, and, for many years after, a number of NGOs were still engaged in attempting to reunite thousands of children who had been separated from their parents at the time of settler relocation.

This paper is published at this time in the hope that the terrible experience of the 1980s is not repeated again.

Preface

This paper was first presented at a conference organized by the Office of the National Committee for Central Planning (ONCCP) in June 1989, and was subsequently published in its *Conference Proceedings*. However, since the *Proceedings* were not distributed widely enough, the work has not been easily accessible either to the reading public or the research community in the country.

ONCCP was, at the time, not only the chief planning agency of the Derg but also the only forum where discussions on wide-ranging issues of economic development was held involving government officials, academics, NGOs and the donor community. While the debate was often not free and open owing to the restrictive environment imposed by the ruling ideology and the highly authoritarian nature of the state, a good number of papers critical of government policies were presented by independent researchers in the conferences and workshops organized by the agency during the 1980s. This paper, which presented a damning criticism of resettlement, was not well received by the authorities and in fact aroused considerable displeasure within the high circles of the Party. At the time, the Derg was convinced that its massive programme of population relocation was quite successful, and it did not tolerate any criticism of it. I believe I would have been in deep trouble if it had not been for the renewed preoccupation of the government in that year with the war in the north of the country.

This country has a resettlement experience going back to the 1960s under the Imperial regime when, through a combination of spontaneous and planned settlement programmes, a relatively small number of northern peasants were settled in western Ethiopia and the Rift Valley areas. Planned settlement during the Derg began in the latter part of the 1970s but became a major undertaking in the 1980s, particularly after the disastrous famine that occurred in the middle of the decade. Resettlement under the Derg was meant to promote food security, to relieve the population pressure of the vulnerable areas and to bring about their environmental rehabilitation. But the programme was a disaster from the very beginning: it was ill-conceived, poorly planned, showed brutal disregard for the welfare of the peasants who participated in it, and exacted a heavy toll in terms of human lives lost, families destroyed and

resources wasted. In the period 1984-86, as part of what in the paper I have called "emergency resettlement", the Derg settled some 600,000 people, mostly in the lowlands of western Ethiopia. In this same period, some 33,000 settlers lost their lives due to disease, hunger, and exhaustion. It is also estimated that close to half a billion Birr was spent on emergency resettlement, but the cost of the damage caused to the environment, of the loss of livestock and other property, or of the distress and suffering it caused to numerous populations and communities will never be known.

Derg officials were convinced that there was plenty of unused arable land in many parts of the country, especially in the southwest to accommodate large numbers of settlers. In the end, this proved unfounded, and the settlement schemes were undertaken for the most part in dry or semi-dry areas which proved to be unsuitable to ox-plough farming and posed serious health hazards to both highland farmers and their livestock.

The settlement programme of the 1980s, which was launched at a time of devastating famine in most of the rural areas, was undertaken without the consent of the settlers themselves, and hence it was unstable from the very beginning. Many settlers abandoned the settlement schemes and returned to their home areas all through the 1980s. The fall of the Derg prompted a large number of settlers to trek back home, although some of them subsequently returned to the settlement schemes of their own free will. But the legacy of the 1980s is still with us today: many landless peasants in the rural areas are former settlers who have returned from settlement, and there still many families that have not recovered from the dislocation, separation and distress they experienced because of the Derg's resettlement program.

The programme involved considerable environmental damage. Large areas were cleared of their vegetation to build homesteads, to acquire farmland and to construct access roads. Resettlement in particular failed to recognize the rights of local people or the carrying capacity of the areas of settlement. It created conflict between the host population and settlers. It also failed to adapt farming practices to the agro-ecological conditions of the lowlands, and as a consequence, the environmental damage involved was quite considerable. Moreover, one of the objectives of resettlement was to reduce the population pressure of the highlands and

thereby to control natural resource degradation. In the end, resettlement had little impact on population pressure or land degradation. On the contrary, it created population pressure and an extensive process of degradation in the host areas.

The Federal government is now embarked on a resettlement programme the initial indications of which suggest may be larger than that undertaken by the Derg in the 1980s. The justification given for such a massive programme is that resettlement, which officials insist will be based on voluntary participation, will ensure food security. But there are many unanswered questions, and many disturbing issues that come immediately to mind, of which the following are significant:

- Have we really learned from the terrible experiences of the past and do we now have a better understanding of the complex process of resettlement than before?
- Are we quite sure we know the immense resources that will be needed to make resettlement a success and do we have such resources at present?
- In particular, do we really have sufficient *unused and environmentally suitable land* to settle large numbers of highland peasants?
- Why has resettlement been launched now when there are over 14 million highland peasants and pastoralists threatened with starvation and the intended beneficiaries themselves are suffering hunger?
- Why did not the government undertake an extended programme of public consultations before it decided to start relocating hungry peasants?

These are issues that I for one do not believe the government has adequately addressed or given sufficient consideration to.

This study is being published for a wider audience now in the belief that it will stimulate informed debate on the subject of resettlement in general and the terrible experiences of the 1980s in particular. It is important that the problem of population relocation as a solution to an enduring problem such as food security, environmental degradation, population pressure, etc., is subjected to wide public debate and serious reflection, otherwise we shall once again make the same costly mistakes and end up worse off than we started.

I have not made any revisions of substance in the draft of the original paper except for corrections of typographical and language errors. I have given it a new title and added a preface. Readers are reminded that the term "the present government" which appears in many places in the text refers to the Derg. The administrative division of the country and the names of the administrative units were different in the 1980s from what they are now.

Introduction

Resettlement (or land settlement)[1] has often been viewed as a convenient and effective measure to solve a wide variety of basic problems, and policy makers and development planners of differing political persuasions have at one time or another have promoted it vigorously, often in place of more cost-effective but less visible programmes. In Africa, the excitement about land settlement and population distribution in general began in the mid-1960s, and numerous settlement schemes, many of them large-scale, high technology operations, were launched in a number of the newly independent countries. By the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, however, excitement had given place to disaffection as many of the projects turned out to be too costly and too complex to operate, and there were very few success stories to sustain earlier hopes and high expectations. In view of the discussion to be presented further down, a brief look at some of the most common justifications for settlement programmes may be instructive.

Settlement or resettlement projects have been undertaken with the aim of relieving population pressure and land shortage, and promoting land consolidation and sound agriculture in areas of high population density. The emphasis here is on the rationalization of natural resources, particularly land, and is broadly congruent with the definition of resettlement given in the literature dealing mostly with the Asian and to some extent the African experiences (Jacoby 1968: 43). In contrast, one may speak of the rationalization of populations, which refers to population relocation to develop "new" or "underutilized" lands (i.e. colonization), and to solve problems associated with spatial imbalances

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[1] Resettlement, land settlement, colonization, or transmigration all refer to the phenomenon of population redistribution, either planned or "spontaneous". In the Ethiopian context, the first term seems to be the more appropriate as it suggests relocating people in areas other than their own. "Resettlement" implies moving people or people moving to new locations. In Latin America, the term often employed is "colonization" which implies opening up or reclaiming lands for utilization. "Transmigration" is favoured by those writing on the Indonesian experience; the word is meant to suggest cross-ocean or cross-island relocation.

and unfavourable settlement patterns. This is how land settlement is defined in the literature dealing with the colonization experience in Latin America (World Bank 1978). Additionally, relocation may be used as a strategy for balanced resource use, and particularly for purposes of regional development (Katzman 1978). However, the regional emphasis could have unfavourable political consequences: resettlement may become a means of buying popularity and votes by politicians and of promoting narrowly-based sectional interests as has happened in some West African countries (Roider 1975).

On the other hand, settlement may be undertaken as a form of compensation for displaced populations whose lands have been utilized for high investment projects such as dams, national parks, etc. (Chambers 1970, Colson 1971). Similarly, settlements have frequently been planned to rehabilitate populations that have been adversely affected by natural disaster, unfavourable climatic behaviour, and/or political conflict. Large scale relocation that takes place following natural or man-made calamity must be considered involuntary resettlement since the settlers involved were either too powerless to refuse participation in the programme, too shocked to use their judgement properly, or unaware of the prospects ahead.

As was noted above, the strict meaning of the term settlement is sedentarization. In programmes where this is the primary aim, the purpose is to convert transient populations -nomadic pastoralists, transhumant or shifting cultivators- to a new way of life based on sedentary forms of agricultural production. In a number of Latin American countries, colonization carries considerable political overtones because it frequently intrudes into the explosive controversy over land tenure and agrarian reform. A few regimes have encouraged colonization as part of a land reform measure designed to benefit the land-less and other marginalized classes, while others have promoted it for just the opposite reason, i.e. to deflect demands for reform and tenurial adjustment. The latter objective may be partially successful if, as is the case occasionally, colonization is sought in times of high commodity exports and favourable agricultural prices (Preston 1980, Hiraoka 1980). In both cases, colonization serves as an important tool to diffuse rural agitation and revolutionary tensions.

Resettlement has also been seen as a means of creating employment opportunities either for the urban unemployed, for the rural poor or for

both. In certain instances, the programme may be associated with large-scale operations like mechanized plantations, macro-industrial or mining schemes and the like, so that the resettled population provide a source of cheap and readily accessible labour. Resettlement may also be employed to check or redirect population migration. One positive outcome of Malaysia's settlement experience, it is said, has been the reversal of its high rural-to-urban migration and the encouragement instead of rural-to-rural migration, an outcome sought by the authorities for a variety of economic reasons (see Oberai 1988).

In several socialist countries in Southeast Asia large numbers of urban residents have been resettled, involuntarily in a majority of cases, in rural areas by governments seeking to reverse existing policies of economic development. This may be considered a policy of urban de-population, and has been tried in one form of another in Kampuchea and Vietnam (see Desbarats 1987 on Vietnam). While the motive may differ, and the manner of implementation less brutal, the practice of human relocation associated with slum clearance and "urban renewal" in Latin America can also be viewed as a form of urban de-population (Hansen and Oliver-Smith 1982).

So far we have stressed the economic and political motives behind resettlement, but there have also been numerous instances where resettlement has been employed as a military and ideological/repressive measure. It has been utilized as a defensive strategy against armed insurgency, endemic banditry (Niddrie 1974), as well as a paramilitary scheme to strengthen border defences. On the other hand, governments have resorted to forced resettlement as a punitive measure against social groups disfavoured by ruling authorities; in such instances the population is often banished to resource poor regions, or regions hardly suitable for human habitation. The deportation of millions of Russian peasants accused of being saboteurs and kulaks, to Siberia during the Stalin era was an ideologically inspired measure of repression which in the end destroyed the social fabric of rural Russia and accelerated agricultural collectivization (see Lewin 1968).

It is evident from the literature that resettlement programmes have been successful where planners have pursued limited objectives, and where the programmes have been specifically designed to deal with one major problem or a group of inter-related problems. But success also

depends, as we shall see more closely further down, on careful advance preparation, choosing the right people and the right place, and fashioning a flexible organizational and tenurial policy. If one is asked to identify three elements that have a strong bearing on the success or failure of settlement projects one will have to say they are the people, the place and the system of production in force.

Land settlement is often conceived in the narrow sense of relocating people in areas said to possess considerable unutilized or under utilized potential (World Bank 1978). But a closer examination reveals that the problem is more complex. What exactly is meant by potential resource, and how does one measure "underutilization"? Can the resource be exploited profitably with the indigenous technology of the resettlers or does it require large outlays and high technology inputs? Will the resource have to be shared with populations already living there, or is it really unutilized? This particular question is rarely raised by settlement planners, but, in more cases than one, so-called underutilized areas are sources of livelihood for a variety of underprivileged or subordinate populations such as the Amerindians in Latin America, cultural minorities in Asia, or pastoralists and shifting cultivators in Africa. Finally, what will be the impact of bringing such lands under cultivation on the environment, wildlife, and on the ecological balance of adjoining ecosystems? These and similar questions will have to be answered before settlement schemes are prepared. Whether or not there are underutilized resources is important to know, but far more important is to determine whether these resources can be rationally utilized and without society having to pay a heavy price in human, economic, political and environmental terms.

Ethiopia has had a resettlement experience of over three decades, and government programmes have often pursued many of the settlement objectives noted above, on some occasions individually, on others at one and the same time. Thus policy inconsistencies and a lack of purposeful goal-orientation has characterized the country's settlement efforts in this whole period. Secondly, neither in the past nor in the post-revolution period has the state, or other agencies, provided an accurate inventory of the resources available for settlement. Several investigations for this purpose were attempted but they have all been inconclusive; further, hardly any evaluation have been made in the broader sense of the subject

indicated in the previous paragraph. Thirdly, in the period as a whole, resettlement programmes were implemented not by specialists (particularly settlement specialists), but rather by run-of-the-mill state functionaries; in fact, the programmes themselves were entrusted (except for a brief three years) to a variety of state agencies, often as an appendage to the agencies' principal responsibilities. Finally, in one form or another, politico-ideological factors have often managed to distort both the stated objectives of resettlement programmes as well as their implementation and subsequent evaluation. These four elements have been an enduring aspect of Ethiopian resettlement and have had an unhealthy impact on numerous programmes through the years.

The Evolution of Resettlement Policy

The earliest policy initiatives grew out of two principal concerns, the one economic and the other implicitly political. These concerns revolved around the question of how to rationalize land use on government "owned" land and thus raise state revenue on the one hand, and on the other, how to provide additional resources to the hard pressed northern peasantry in the southern regions (where most government land was located) which were mainly inhabited by subordinate populations. In the pre-revolution period settlement schemes were always planned for the northern peasantry, and the needs of the peasantry of minority cultures were rarely considered. The major assumption in this period (i.e. the late 1950s and early '60s) was that the government held, in the form of state domain lands, vast property which ought to be employed for settlement of peasant households living in areas of serious land shortage. This was in fact to be a double edged policy: it was to relieve population and land pressure in the over-crowded areas, and at the same time serve as a means of distributing land to the needy and those with insecure tenures. The rationalization of government land use was to be a resettlement programme as well as a land reform measure, and as such, was designed to reassure the landed classes that their economic power in the rural areas was not in imminent danger.

Settlement as government land use, as the policy was frequently

called[2], was flawed from the start because neither the meaning nor the extent of state domain land was accurately determined. In the wider and looser sense of the term, government land was described as land over which no individual or corporate body had staked a legally valid claim. By this definition more than two thirds of the land of the country would fall under government ownership. This was of course unrealistic, not to say downright unjust, since customary tenure systems in the country did not operate along the lines of private ownership involving title deeds and cadastral registration. The government's claim on the other hand was based on ancient imperial prerogatives which were neither widely recognized nor socially accepted, nevertheless, policy makers and their foreign advisors continued to draw up plans for resettlement on the assumption that the land resources at the disposal of the government were more than sufficient to meet the needs of the country.

Just as policy makers in the 1960s and early 70s were convinced of the extensive resources under state ownership that could be tapped for development purposes, so too are officials of the present government concerning the vast resources that can immediately be utilized for large scale settlement programmes. The cornerstone of the present resettlement policy is the view that large areas of the country, suitable for agriculture and human habitation (often described as fertile virgin lands) are currently un- or under-utilized, and thus settlement programmes on these lands offer a sure way of acquiring the maximum benefit with the minimum cost. Here again a complex problem, and one on which there is insufficient information and knowledge, is shorn of its multifarious aspects and reduced to a rather simple "virgin lands" policy.

While the pre- and post- revolution programmes evolved in quite different social circumstances -for instance, under the old regime there was no land reform, but on the other hand resettlement was not prompted by large scale famine, whereas the reverse is true under the PMAC- the affinity between state domain policy and virgin lands policy is quite close. Current policy may also be viewed as having a double purpose: the principal aim has been to redistribute populations for agricultural and other reasons, but complementary to this is also the desire to accelerate the pace of agricultural collectivization. Here, as in the past, the political

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[2] See MLRA's studies issued in 1969, 1972, and 1974.

and the economic intrude into each other discretely.

Another major element of resettlement policy concerns policy-makers' perception of the existing system of peasant production and the alternative development choices they defined for themselves. These choices revolved around the issues of "intensive" versus "extensive" agriculture, and large scale versus small-scale agriculture. In the pre-revolution period resettlement was accepted as a viable programme because it was believed that this would expand the farm area of the country and thereby increase the gross agricultural product. An alternative policy favouring the promotion of intensive agriculture was not considered feasible because it was considered that smallholder peasant production had already reached its limit and exhausted it possibilities (ILO 1970: Part III). This assumption was tacitly accepted in the post-revolution period, and now forms the corner stone of current policy. The choice in favour of "extensive" agriculture was given a major boost by the food shortages and famines that paralysed the rural areas since the late 1970s; these disasters were eagerly seized upon by the authorities as proof that intensive agriculture was doomed and headed for recurrent cycles of large scale tragedies. The massive emergency resettlement of 1985, following the worst famine the country had ever experienced, was but the logical outcome of this mode of thinking whose origins may be traced to the end of the 1960s.

The issues surrounding large scale versus small scale agriculture will not be debated here, we shall simply note in passing that in both the pre- and post-revolution periods (with greater emphasis in the latter), policy options have tended to favour high investment resettlement schemes than low cost ones. At present, large scale, irrigated and mechanized settlements are more preponderant and absorb a disproportionate share of government expenditure on rural rehabilitation as a whole. From the point of view of cost effectiveness, high investment schemes often have disappointing records. But there is also an important aspect that has not often been discussed in the literature, and this has to do with the human consequences of large scale mechanized projects. Masses of peasants, who as everybody knows, are greatly attached to the land and to individual forms of production, are transformed in the process of resettlement into property-less agricultural labourers, a transformation that is often forced on the peasants involved, and, for many a distressing

experience. The conversion of a class of independent cultivators into a class of agricultural proletarians is a difficult undertaking under any circumstances, and it is quite certain that this has been an important factor in the poor performance of large-scale operations.

A third element that has informed Ethiopian resettlement policy from the earliest period has been the need felt by almost all state officials to sedentarize the "transient" population of the country. By transient population we are referring to nomadic pastoralists as well as shifting and transhumant cultivators. Sedentarization is a common theme running through the country's agricultural policies from the beginning of the 1960s to the present. The propensity to sedentarize, as it were, has so infected resettlement policy in this period that few international agencies supporting Ethiopia's resettlement effort have raised any questions about it. The often unexpressed but nevertheless strongly held view is that all forms of transient production are inferior and the laws of social evolution require that they pass through systems of production based on sedentary labour and fixed habitation.

Many RRC documents and some other official publications describe nomadic pastoralism, for instance, as a form of livelihood involving 'aimless wandering following the tails of herds'. This rather contemptuous characterization probably expresses the depth of knowledge of RRC and other government officials about pastoralism, which they are so eager to transform. We know, however, that populations practising pastoralism and other forms of transient production employ fairly sophisticated techniques of adaptation to their particular environment, possess a rather comprehensive knowledge of the ecosystem in which they operate, and utilize simple but effective methods both to efficiently exploit the natural resources and to regenerate these same resources. As we shall try to show in more detail later, sedentarization does not always meet the developmental needs of transient populations, and may in fact prove worthless, if not harmful in a good many cases.

These three enduring elements have played a significant role in shaping resettlement policy for the past three decades, and will probably continue to do so for some time to come.

It is quite evident from the general literature that judged in terms of their stated objectives (as well as from other perspectives), resettlement programmes in most Third World countries have had a disappointing

record: in specific terms, costs have been high and returns low, there have been far more failed schemes than successful ones, and the environmental damage caused by large scale land clearance and de-forestation has been considerable (see Oberai 1986, World Bank 1978, Chambers 1969; for an example of failure of resettlement in an advanced capitalist country (Canada), see Hoggart 1979). In general, low cost, smallholder settlement schemes have better chances of success than high cost and large scale ones. The Mwea irrigation project in Kenya and the Gezira scheme in the Sudan may be cited as examples of successful high investment projects (Chambers and Moris 1973). Smallholder does not of course always mean minuscule, and the relative size of individual holdings may vary considerably depending on the nature of the cropping system in practice. In the colonization experience in Latin America, it has been found that productivity declines on holdings below 50 hectares but rises on those between 50 and 100 hectares (Durand and Hilhorst 1987).

There is sufficient evidence to show that spontaneous settlements generally perform better than planned settlements (Nelson 1973, World Bank 1978). Government sponsored schemes suffer from a variety of constraints, including poor policy initiative, bureaucracy and inefficient organization, and on many occasions corruption, and manipulation of settlers and settlements by politicians and dissident forces (Oberai 1986). Furthermore, state supported programmes tend to raise high expectations among beneficiaries, which the state is either unwilling or unable to fulfil.

The Ethiopian experience is in many ways no different from that of a good number of Third World countries, and as we shall try to show in the pages that follow many of the conclusions drawn from other experiences apply to this country as well. However, in certain, more concrete ways, resettlement in this country, particularly in the post-revolution period, has had a history unique to itself. Stated briefly, the resettlement experience of the last decade or so may be viewed as a textbook example of how to mismanage, or lay the groundwork for the failure of settlement programmes. Everything that the settlement specialist will work hard to avoid has been committed: forced recruitment of settlers, serious mismanagement during the relocation process, poor preparation of settlement sites, poor reception of settlers in their new homes, callous disregard of settler sensitivities both before and after settlement, hunger and food shortages in settlement areas, and forced collectivization of

settler agriculture. As a result, the country's settlement programme is in deep crisis, bedevilled, among other things, by low settler morale, high rates of desertions, poor economic performance and soaring costs.

The Resettlement Experience: Phase I (1976 - 1983)

In this study we are mainly concerned with the post-revolution resettlement experience, nevertheless, a brief review of resettlement under the Old Regime is in order for comparative purposes and also to obtain a broader perspective on the subject. The settlement efforts of the pre-revolution period were in the main unsuccessful largely because the policies and programmes contained contradictory elements within them. While policy designers urged caution and a slow pace of progress -because they believed the costs involved were high and there was need for careful initial investigation and preparation of projects- officials in the implementing agencies (specially MLRA, MNCD, MoA, etc.) were impatient with the existing pace of progress and eager to launch a large number of settlement schemes on government owned land.

MLRA in particular commissioned several studies by foreign specialists and obtained the support of international organizations like the World Bank, FAO, and ILO[3]. In 1972, an inter-ministerial committee under the leadership of MLRA, and involving half a dozen government agencies was formed to study and prepare resettlement programmes in various parts of the country. Within

[3] Numerous studies were commissioned along these lines; see in particular ILO 1970; J.D.MacArthur 1972, 1971; MLRA 1969, 1972, 1974; Wetterhall 1972. It should be noted here that the World Bank took a cautious attitude about resettlement partly on account of the high costs involved. It suggested a ten year investment outlay of Eth $56 million for settlement (ie., 5.6 million a year) which was 3.7% of the total investment for agricultural development proposed for the same period (IBRD 1973: Vol. I, 43; also Vol. III: Annex 21).

MLRA itself a land settlement division was established in the same year for the same purpose. Earlier, in 1971 and also in 1972, high level delegations were sent on a tour of Kenya and Tanzania to study the development of settlement programmes in these countries (MacArthur 1972: 13ff). Interestingly enough, MLRA's final plan was to settle 20 000 households every five years, a goal similar to that proposed by the government's last Plan (TFYP: 373).

As was noted above, settlement policies were designed to promote the goals of both agricultural rationalization as well as land redistribution, and it was hoped (though not always fully articulated) that the greater expansion of settlement projects would resolve the problems of land reform to a considerable extent. On the other hand, the Planning Commission Office (PCO) promoted resettlement as a strategy for expanding employment opportunities and absorbing the growing excess labour force. The PCO's arguments were that the rate of population growth was far higher than expected and would increase considerably in the Fourth Plan period (i.e., 1975 to 1979), the development of the rural sector was proceeding at a slower pace than planned, and employment opportunities outside agriculture were not promising. To solve the employment crisis, PCO proposed a two pronged strategy of enlarging the existing agricultural package programmes in the traditional settlement areas (this would in reality benefit mainly the southern peasantry), and expanding resettlement projects. Of these two proposals, the latter was to be the more important because the agency believed that the package formula would only provide employment for about 10% of the farm labour force in the Fourth Plan period, and settlement remained the only means of creating new jobs on a large scale (PCO 1973: Ch. III). It may be worth noting that PCO's arguments implicitly support the "extensive agriculture" thesis discussed above.

Another objective of resettlement in this period was that the programme was envisaged as a means of encouraging the diffusion of improved technology in agricultural production. It was believed

that the programme would serve as a testing ground for new techniques, which would then be promoted in the traditional sectors. There were very few specific plans as to how this technological development would occur, but policy advisors were certain that peasants involved in the new schemes would readily adopt new farm techniques if given the opportunity. Improvements in production and in the level of income of settlers were presumed to come largely from new farm practices and improved technologies (MacArthur 1972: 148ff).

Thirdly, many government officials were aware that spontaneous resettlement by small groups of peasants had been going on for a long time, but large-scale programmes did not as a rule attract individual peasants unless the state or some sponsoring agency was actively involved. Paradoxically, MLRA was sympathetic to the proposal submitted by one of its influential foreign consultants that land settlement should denote "processes which lead to the orderly introduction of people into previously prepared stretches of land, and the subsequent occupation of the land for the main purpose of agricultural production" (MacArthur 1971: 5.11). The physical layout of the project, the tenure system, and the land use pattern would be pre-determined; this would effectively rule out spontaneous and low cost settlement. Indeed, the PCO came out against individual initiated settlement activities because it believed settlers will damage the environment through improper land use practices; it accused spontaneous settlers as being the cause of serious land degradation in several parts of the country (PCO 1973: III-5).

There were too many agencies running a wide variety of settlement schemes. Some eight or so government agencies, of which the main ones were MNCD, MoA, AVA, and MLRA, and about a dozen private organizations and charities were involved both in high and low cost programmes in Arssi, the Awash and Rift valleys, Gamo Goffa, Wollega and Kaffa provinces. The "colonization" or "pioneer settlement" of Setit Humera may be

cited as an exception; this was an independent scheme which involved thousands of individual peasants and commercial farmers who were attracted to the area by the high profits to be gained from the cultivation of sesame, a valuable export crop (see ILO 1970, Dessalegn 1986). The schemes run by the government or private agencies were diverse, complex and difficult to co-ordinate, and the settlers came from equally diverse social backgrounds. They consisted of evicted tenants, poor peasants, ex-servicemen, school drop-outs, vagrants and the urban unemployed, pastoralists and shifting cultivators; each one of these groups had different needs, different expectations, and a different labour experience. Of the government agencies involved in the program, MNCD operated the largest number of schemes, mainly in Kaffa, the Rift Valley and Gamo Goffa. AVA operated several settlements for pastoralists in the Awash Valley, IAR did likewise in the Gode-Kelafo area of the Ogaden, while am experimental programme for the Anuak and the Nuer ethnic groups was started in Gambella awraja (AVA 1974, Simpson 1975, Ellman 1972). Many of the resettlement programmes in Wollega province were run by private charities and religious organizations. In 1974 there were more schemes operated by non-government agencies, but nearly two thirds of the settler population was to be found in government run programmes.

By the end of the 1960s it was fairly widely known that settlements run by individual peasants were relatively more successful than large-scale ones (ILO 1970: 29), and yet both government and non-government agencies continued to promote high cost large-scale schemes throughout the latter years of the Old Regime. This was not due to deliberate discrimination against small-scale operations but rather a product of uncertainty and confusion among policy makers and settlement planners. For example, MLRA's settlement policies -the most carefully worked out of all- were unclear as to what kinds of agricultural schemes were to be promoted. While the Ministry itself favoured low cost, individual operated farms, its plans often called for group

settlement and group based land-holding structures, which tended to favour large scale operations. To make matters worse, large-scale operations, which at one time were designed for settlers, such as the Awassa and Arba Minch state farms, were turned into commercial plantations and settlers who could not be accommodated within the new framework were relocated elsewhere, at times in low cost schemes. In brief, settlement costs were high, the rate of success was low, and the viability of a number of schemes in the Rift Valley, Kaffa and Gamo Goffa was in serious question. Several settlement projects, which received only limited support, were abandoned by settlers. It should be pointed out however that the rate of settler turnover in this period was minuscule compared to that in the post-revolution period. Further, settler desertion occurred here because of unfavourable environmental conditions, poor land allotments and lack of financial support.

There was a great deal of optimism among government officials and their foreign backers over the land thought to be available for settlement. The first "systematic" estimation of the resource base of the country was made by two specialists (Burke and Thorneley) under contract from the World Bank and their findings was to be the basis of all subsequent estimations (MLRA 1969). According to their calculations, some 11.0 million hectares of land suitable for planned settlement and peasant-based agriculture was available in the country; of this land, some 8.5 million was located in south-western Ethiopia (i.e., in Kaffa, Wollega, Illubabor and Gamo Goffa), and this area was recommended as the main area of resettlement. All the land said to be available was government owned land which could be easily turned into freehold or contractual tenure for settler households. These findings were not seriously challenged for quite some time, although the figures were altered in later evaluations. Wetterhall, for example, reduced the area to a total of only 8 million hectares, while MLRA's own in-house study (1974) made a slightly higher

estimation. According to the latter document, the land available for settlement measured 16.5 million hectares, some 10 million of which was located in the southwestern provinces. The cost of bringing all this land into productive use, particularly the investment that would be needed to eradicate malaria and trypanosomiasis, to construct irrigation and water management schemes, etc., were not seriously considered. Any estimation of the land resources of the country was in reality no better than intelligent guess work, for at the time no physical inventory had been made, nor did specialists have access to the services of satellite imagery. The estimation given here is thus highly exaggerated, and betrayed the optimism of the authors and the euphoria of public officials and foreign advisers alike regarding the prospects for rural settlements.

According to the government's own assessments, the resettlement effort was in the main unsuccessful because of the ad hoc character of operations, the great diversity of settlement types and the uncoordinated nature of the activities of a large number of government and non-government agencies involved. The authorities could point only to a few ventures -WADU and AVA settlements to be precise- as examples of success. Public sector costs per settler family ranged from almost nothing in the low cost schemes to E$15 000 in the AVA irrigated projects. The assessments noted specifically that the difficulties stemmed from inadequate planning of programmes, inappropriate settler selection, inadequate budgetary support, and inexperienced staff (IEG: 19-20). Most of these criticisms are appropriate also to the settlement efforts of the post-revolution period.

The resettlement experience of the pre-revolution period did not serve as a starting point for post-revolution programmes, nor did the lessons of the past benefit policy makers in the latter part of the 1970s when the PMAC began to launch a series of large-scale resettlement projects in several parts of the country. The new government strongly believed that resettlement would provide a

"lasting solution" to the hard-pressed peasantry, and particularly to the population living in the drought prone areas. Since drought and mass starvation had played a part in the overthrow of the Old Regime, the earlier policies were motivated by a desire to deal with the famine problem, but gradually issues of population pressure, food production, land use, etc. were included as major justifications. The new policies did not in essence involve new thinking, new principles, or new innovations; rather the basic assumptions of the past were resurrected in refurbished form and put into practice with a sense of urgency and decisiveness. The main difference between the past and the present is thus not so much over principles but rather over the scale of operations and the pace of movement. While in the past, policy implementation had moved at a slow and agonising pace, in the post-revolution period it raced at breakneck speed and with reckless abandon.

In the early period of the revolution, resettlement was part of the general activity of the newly established RRC and was conceived primarily as a rehabilitation measure for victims of famine. In effect, this was the instinctive response of the authorities and charity organizations to the dislocation of peasants by natural disaster. Until the Settlement Authority (SA) was established in 1976 as an autonomous agency within the Ministry of Agriculture, settlement planning was the responsibility of the Inter-ministerial Group on Land Settlement, and RRC was the chief implementing agency. In this period, there were a number of radical reform measures which had an impact on existing schemes and would have a bearing on future plans, and among the most significant of these was the land reform of 1975. Subsequent legislation was to broaden the organizational and economic base of resettlement, planned or already in operation. In the first year of the military government, very little information was available about existing or newly formed resettlement schemes, and it was not until the end of 1975 that a national inventory of projects was carried out. Until then, information on some twenty-one schemes was, at least

unofficially, available [Simpson 1975], but the findings of the inventory, made available the following year, revealed that there were at least fifty five schemes with a combined population of approximately 35 to 40, 000. Of these schemes, forty were established before and the rest after the revolution (see Simpson: 138ff; FAO/UNDP 1980: 6-7. We have excluded leper colonies and handicapped rehabilitation schemes). There is reason to believe that the survey did not cover all resettlement schemes and perhaps some half a dozen or so may have been left out. Be that as it may, the inventory was badly needed and provided a basis for evaluation and planning.

The Settlement Authority (SA) was established in early February 1976; it was to be the sole government agent responsible for planned settlement and was authorized to take over the work previously done by a host of state agencies. Pastoralist settlements in the Awash Valley still remained under the Awash Valley Development Authority but all state run schemes, and many private ones were brought under the SA. While it was not explicitly spelt out, the intention of the government was to monopolize the work of resettlement and to exclude non-government agencies. (RRC finally succeeded in driving out private organizations from resettlement activity in the early 1980s.) In the period 1976-79, however, the SA run its operations in competition with some ten or so non-government sponsored programmes. The first task of the new Authority was to bring together all the existing projects under one roof, to draw up viable settlement guidelines for future projects, and to pursue planned expansions as the need arose. On top of this, it had to build up an organizational framework capable of planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating settlement projects in various parts of the country. It was supported in both these tasks by a number of international donor agencies, particularly FAO, UNDP, and UNHCR. But the Authority was beset with a host of problems from its very inception. First, it was not an autonomous agency but rather tied to the cumbersome

bureaucratic network, and implementing decisions such as purchasing needed materials, carrying out civil works, or recruiting specialised staff were delayed or impeded. Thus its projected plan of settling 20,000 families per year was never fulfilled due to these and other related bottlenecks. Secondly, it came under pressure from political quarters, which wanted to accelerate the pace of resettlement and to employ the programme for a wide variety of purposes. The SA thus could not plan, select and establish settlement schemes, nor recruit and relocate settlers in accordance with its own guidelines.

The objective of settlement, which at the beginning was designed to be a form of long-term rehabilitation of famine victims, was enlarged considerably. Resettlement was now to be employed as a means of assisting poor and landless peasants, of relieving the employment crisis in the urban areas, accelerating the sedentarization of transient populations, promoting resource conservation and sound agricultural practices in the densely populated areas, bringing under cultivation "under-utilized" lands, establishing a paramilitary defence force on the Ethio-Somalie border, and rehabilitating returning Ethiopian refugees and displaced persons. Indeed, in the period after the establishment of the SA, settlements came to be seen as a kind of universal solution to almost any and all problems. This attitude was all the more reinforced as high government officials came to believe (without sufficient evidence) that there were vast land resources in the country that were not being fully utilized. By 1979, the following types of settlers were to be found in the Authority's 35 schemes: famine victims, poor and landless peasants, the urban unemployed, ex-servicemen, craftsmen, pastoralists and shifting cultivators, ex-refugees, and war displaced persons.

One of the Authority's first tasks was to design what was called a 'settlement model' to be used to structure all schemes uniformly. According to the model eventually drawn up, there were to be two categories of settlement, low cost (i.e., cultivation by

animal power), and special (i.e. mechanized), the first designed for units of 250 households, the second for 500. Each category was further divided into two, the division based on whether agriculture was rain-fed or irrigated. The model was rather inflexible because it did not take into account differences in land potential, ecology and civil infrastructure. In the special schemes (and some of the low cost irrigated ones), agriculture was organized in primary co-operatives, and in the early stages, a large proportion of settlers in special schemes were from urban areas (except those in the Awash Valley); peasants were settled largely in low cost schemes because the Authority thought this would suit them better. In both types of settlements, beneficiaries were expected to be "self-reliant" in five years (MoAS 1978, Settlement Authority 1979). In each rain-fed scheme, land per household measured 2.5 hectares, whereas in the irrigated schemes it was 1.5.

As shown in Table 1, the Authority had a total of 20,435 households (75,766 persons) in all its schemes by the end of 1978, however, other official documents give different figures for the same period. According to the Authority itself, the settlers numbered 22,221 families and 64,505 persons (Settlement Authority 1979), but RRC (1988) puts the population at 20,306 families and 62,000 persons.

Table 1. Settlement Models, Schemes and Settlers 1978

Model	Unit Size (Ha.each)	Schemes (No.)	Settlers (Hhd)
LCR	650	19	9000 (25700)
LCI	375	5	1800 (11519)
SR	1250	8	8202 (31587)
SI	750	3	1434 (6960)
Total	*35*	*20435*	*(75766)*

***Note*:** LCR: Low cost rain-fed; LCI: Low cost irrigated; SR: Special rain-fed; SI: Special irrigated.

The figures in brackets show total population.

A great majority of the schemes were established in 1976 and 1978. According to a knowledgeable authority, SA is said to have spent approximately 2 000 Birr per settler household in the low cost schemes, and 2 600 per household in the special schemes (FAO/UNDP 1980: 40). The figures do not however cover all expenses incurred, and cannot therefore be used for comparative purposes. At the end of 1978, settlers in all SA schemes were cultivating a total of about 14 000 hectares of land, a limited achievement given the expectations of government authorities.

In April 1979 all resettlement work was concentrated in the hands of RRC which now took over the Settlement Authority and the settlement duties of the Awash Valley Development Agency. While SA's policy had been in favour of moving ahead at a more measured pace, RRC in contrast decided to accelerate resettlement programmes right from the start; this may have been due to pressure from higher authorities as well as pressure arising from greater drought frequency in the early 1980s. This did not bode well for resettlement because the agency did not have full knowledge of the conditions of the existing programmes, nor did it have sufficient time to take stock of the available resources or to learn from the SA's experience. Some of the systems drawn up by the SA were utilized by RRC though in modified form. Thus the settlement models designed earlier were changed so that settlers in high input schemes were organized in secondary co-operatives (*welba*s). All settlers were expected to be self-sufficient in food in two crop seasons (or 18 months), and fully self-reliant in three crop seasons (or 3 years) (RRC 1981 D; 1983). The decision to merge SA with RRC was ill advised, but policy makers may have been persuaded by the fact that the latter agency had better connections with the international donor community, and was thought to be best placed to garner greater support for settlements. However, support from international agencies turned out to be far less than expected, and only a few donors volunteered to shoulder some of the burden of resettlement. RRC showed greater inclinations towards high cost and high capital input projects. In the period between 1977 and 1983, total capital costs for such projects were estimated to be over 121 million Birr (FAO/UNDP 1983: 16). The largest project was at Assossa (western Wollega) which by the end of 1983 had a land allotment measuring 21,600 hectares, 16 settlement units, and a settler population of 7,000 families or 22,400 persons.

In this same period, more than half the settler population was located in three large-scale projects: Assossa (in western Wollega province), Teddelle and Harole (in southwest Shoa) and Harewa (in Bale province). By the end of 1984, some 68% of settlements under RRC were high cost schemes and contained nearly 75% of settler families (MoA/FAO 1985: 27-8). In comparison, 53% of settler families were in low cost schemes under the SA (MoAS 1978: 8-9). In 1980-82 alone, RRC conducted several feasibility studies for mechanized settlements in various parts of the country, including in Gambella (to settle the ethnic minorities living there), Humera (to provide a pool of cheap labour for the state farms located there), the Belles catchment in Mettekel (to settle some 2,000 households), and Harewa (to relocate the existing settlement units) (RRC 1981a, b, c, and 1982). Its most ambitious project was a grand settlement complex on the lower Diddessa river, and this was to resettle 15,000 families on nearly 72,000 hectares of irrigated land at an estimated cost of over US $50 million (FAO/UNDP 1983: 15-16). RRC's infatuation with what may be termed high-profile projects stemmed from a desire on the part of its officials to make a quick impact, and a belief that the road to success lay in modern, mechanized operations.

On the eve of the 1984/85 famine and the subsequent emergency resettlement, RRC was operating a large variety of projects in ten of the country's fourteen provinces. The schemes were grouped into four basic categories: large-scale conventional, special, medium, and low cost settlements. There is no reliable information about the condition of settlements and settlers and an in-depth evaluation of the programme in this period is difficult. The reasons for the dearth of data are the following: a) RRC did not maintain an accurate information system about the projects despite the fact that its own in-house specialists as well as foreign consultants had repeatedly stressed the importance of such a system (RRC 1984 C; FAO/UNDP 1983). Without a reliable flow of information, and accurate records the management, evaluation and planning of settlements becomes a hazardous undertaking. What little information was available was unreliable because some of it had been tampered with and some of it lacked "the objectivity necessary for evaluation purposes", as one consultant tactfully put it (FAO UNDP 1983: 30). b) Settler turnover was very high in almost all of the projects (we shall return to this point later).

The picture that emerges by the latter part of 1984 is one of considerable confusion and disorganization: there was very little information available on many settlement schemes, co-ordination of programme activities was poor, costs continued to soar, and the morale of both settlers and settlement staff was low. Some settlement schemes were not even known to the authorities and did not appear in their records. According to RRC (1984a: 20), there were 83 settlement schemes with a population of 40,000 families or 160,000 people by 1984. According to another source, the figures are lower, 72 schemes, 30,628 families, 136,276 persons (Council of Ministers 1988A: 33ff); yet other sources give different figures and one is not certain where the truth lies (see PMAC 1983).

The Major Problems in this Period[4]

In many RRC policy documents, it is stressed that careful selection and preparation of resettlement sites precedes actual relocation of settlers, and the recruitment of beneficiaries is done on a voluntary basis and no forceful or unethical methods are employed. In practice, however, the situation is very different and the instances where careful advance planning and voluntary recruitment had taken place have been few and far between.

Every student of settlement knows that success in this venture depends on a host of factors, among which advance preparation is an important ingredient. RRC's record in terms of site selection and preparation remains very poor. Many of the settlement schemes were launched before sufficient investigation or preparation had been completed. The large Assossa project, for example, was started without feasibility or agro-climatic studies (Olok 1980: 13). Where such studies had been carried out prior to settlement, they tended to be perfunctory or insufficient. On occasions, settlement schemes were started in areas which later were found to be either unsuitable or required high initial

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[4] The discussion that follows is based on: Council of Ministers 1988a, b; NRPC-CPSC 1982; ONCCP 1984a; PMAC 1983; and RRC 1984c.

investment. Both the Gambella and Belles settlement projects, for instance, were recommended despite the fact that in both areas the lands identified were known to be either unsuitable or only marginally suitable (RRC 1981b, c). In the case of Belles, the go-ahead for resettlement was given even though the study team knew that the record of the state farm located there since 1978 was very poor in part because of unfavourable agro-climatic factors.

Poor planning was responsible for the closure or relocation of a number of projects in several parts of the country. The Gambella resettlement scheme struggled for several years but had to be closed down at the end of 1983 because of a variety of recurrent problems including poor site selection (Council of Ministers 1988A: 33). The agency may have invested up-to 6 million Birr by the time the project was closed down. Similarly, the Melka Oda project in Bale was found to be agriculturally and environmentally unsuitable ("disastrous" is the term used by the agency's investigating team). After more than three years in operation, the settled population of some 4,370 families had to be moved to Harewa, another site in the same province (RRC 1982). The costs involved were estimated to be between 12 and 15 million Birr.

That the resettlement programme in this period was in crisis was evidenced by a high rate of settler desertions. Peasants and other settlers abandoned the projects in droves, most returning to their original homes. According to one source (PMAC 1983: 75-6) some 40,319 settlers deserted resettlement in the years between 1976 and 1982. The highest rate of desertions recorded were in the high profile projects in Shoa and Wollega provinces. According to another source, Harole in Shoa had a desertion rate of 73% in the period 1978-82, Anger Gutin and Diddessa Kone, both in Wollega, had a rate of 71% and 68% respectively, Gato in Gamo Goffa 56%, and Meqi in the upper Awash 48% (NRPC-CPSC 1982: 56). The desertion rate from low cost schemes is not known, but is believed to be fairly high, although it does not compare with the high cost schemes.

Who were the deserters and why did they desert? We do not have sufficient information to answer the question conclusively, but from what is available the people who took great risks to abandon the programme were: a) urban settlers, particularly those who had some means of earning a living; b) peasants who were taken to resettlement by unethical

methods; c) peasants who had wanted to give resettlement a try but found the conditions in the projects intolerable; and d) peasants who were separated from their families and found it difficult to cope. Desertion was a hazardous undertaking, and on occasions deserters had to trek all the way home suffering hunger, lack of shelter and even arrest by zealous peasant associations on the way.

In each of the high cost settlements, settler performance was poor, and morale was low. Most of the official sources used in this study are unanimous in their assessment of the reasons for this poor state of affairs (see esp. NRPC-CPSC 1982: 80ff; PMAC 1983: 79ff). In the first place, settlers were unhappy because they believed they were forced, unfairly enticed, or tricked into resettlement. Secondly, there was almost unanimous opposition to agricultural co-operatives, which were in force in all the projects. Thirdly, settlers were unfamiliar with the machinery and equipment used in the high cost schemes, and there were frequent breakdowns and malfunctions as a result. Finally the projects were plagued with poor organization and poor management, and a large number of settlers believed that they were poorly remunerated for their labour.

Because of the way settlers were recruited, many had not brought their families with them and this was a serious source of dissatisfaction. In many instances, RRC did not actually recruit settlers; this was done by local committees in the various provinces. Urban resettlers were often youngsters and vagrants who had been forcibly rounded up and transported to the projects. In famine prone areas, peasants selected for resettlement were not allowed to take their belongings with them, and corruption among the recruiting committees was not unknown. In Wollo, for example, peasant resettlers had to hand over their personal belongings to the local committees which promised them that the goods will be sold and money sent to them in their new homes. But peasants never received the money, and according to RRC records some of it was embezzled by local officials and some of it ended up in the provincial treasury. RRC's remonstrations and repeated efforts to recover the money on behalf of the peasants were unsuccessful (RRC 1984d: 15). This was not the only case of corruption, other similar cases are known to have occurred in other places as well (ONCCP 1984a: 54). Corruption and poor recruitment practices added to settler discontent which in turn contributed to poor

labour discipline.

The recruitment process was haphazard and poorly executed. Although RRC claims on paper that recruitment is carefully done, and families are allowed ample time (3 months) before they are transported to resettlement sites, in practice both recruitment and transportation were carried out hurriedly and often in an unethical manner. Peasants were not given the chance to weigh their options nor were they givenn adequate information about the settlement sites. A large number of peasants and almost all urbanites were sent to resettlement against their wish. In a number of sites, the settler population contained a considerable proportion of elderly men and women, orphaned children, the sick and the invalid (PMAC 1983: 53ff). There were also settlers, who, by the country's standards, could not be considered poor or in distress: these included charcoal burners, contract and seasonal workers, urban peddlers and itinerant traders, weavers and tailors.

As was noted above, large-scale settlements were organized into co-operatives. Each household was allowed a small garden plot for produce for home use, but these plots were tiny, usually not more than 0.1 hectares. The co-operative arrangement was of course a major source of settler discontent and may have contributed the most to settler desertions. Almost all the evaluation reports commissioned by RRC point out that co-operativization has been a cause of dissatisfaction as well as of poor performance. The agency itself has revealed that that co-operative farming has led to poor work discipline, poor handling of farm equipment, low productivity and low morale (RRC 1988: 73; see also RRC 1984c). In the low cost schemes, settlers work their own private plots but here again plot sizes are very small. On the average, privately worked plots measure about 1.0 to 1.5 hectares per family, and in most cases are not sufficient to enable a household to meet its basic needs. In the pre-revolution period, average settler holdings measured 3 to 5 hectares, but in some instances they could be as high as 15 to 20 hectares. On top of this, RRC ran a poor support system, particularly for low cost projects; settlers here had limited or no access to credit, agricultural inputs, and similar other services.

Cost calculations for settlements are invariably complex and rarely accurate in the full sense of the word. Further, cost analysis (necessary for planning purposes) often focuses on the material aspects of resettlement, the social, human and psychological costs are usually either ignored or

simply glossed over. Several attempts have been made to calculate the cost of establishing settler households, but the most comprehensive effort so far is to be found in a FAO commissioned report (MoA/FAO 1985: 44ff). In the document, establishing a settler is presumed to take one half to two years, and a settler family is taken to consist of 4.5 persons- assumptions which may be challenged as being unrealistic. Be that as it may, the document estimates that the cost in Birr of settling one family in the early 1980s was 10,761 in special irrigated projects, 10,521 in special rain-fed ones, and 3,607 in low cost schemes. On the face of it, this compares rather well with many other experiences. In World Bank assisted programmes in Third World countries, the average cost of establishing a household in projects with irrigation components was US$14,000, and in rain-fed schemes $6,460 (World Bank 1978: 44). In Burkina Fasso, it cost US$12,500 to settle a family in the late 1970s (McMillan 1987: 307). In Indonesia, the cost was US$600 per year per family in the early 1970s but a whopping $11,663 per year in the early 1980s (Arndt 1988: 87).

The settlement cost in our case appears low because the time given to establish a family is low, and a number of cost elements have not been included (more on this further down). It is now common knowledge that the number of schemes that became independent of state subsidy or donor support are very few. The government defines self-sufficiency as meaning that a settler household is able to cover all its production costs, meet all the basic needs of the family (including social obligations, taxes and other exactions), and retain a small surplus. Even by these low standards, there were only a limited number of projects that had achieved self-sufficiency. RRC once boasted that of the 83 settlement schemes under its authority, 57 had become "self-reliant"- a success rate of almost 69% (RRC 1984 A: 20). This is sharply contradicted by the available evidence. Most of the major mechanized projects, a majority of which was launched between 1976 and 1978, are still dependent on government handouts. The evidence in 1984 was that none of the settlement schemes administered by RRC were self-supporting, and a majority of them were 8 to 10 years old (ONCCP 1984a: 55). Of the high-cost projects, those in the Awash Valley, Harewa and Assossa were by far the most expensive.

By the early 1980s, RRC was finding it difficult to fully operate all the projects and at the same time fulfil its annual resettlement plans. The

reasons given by the agency for this was that it was suffering from budgetary constraints, and it also wished to consolidate existing programmes rather than plan new ones (ONCCP 1984a: 55ff). But one should also point out that the agency had, as it were, bitten more than it could chew and was just beginning to realize the complex nature of the undertaking it was involved in. Most of its material and human resources were deployed in support of few high profile projects which continued to absorb a disproportionate share of government revenue; these had to be kept going because there appeared to be no other alternative. The early confidence, born of naivety, that resettlement projects would become independent and "self-reliant" within 18 to 24 months, and would then be able to contribute to the regeneration of the country's agriculture could no longer be sustained as the poorly planned and poorly managed schemes sank deeper into trouble, and more and more peasants decided to vote with their feet.

On the eve of the great famine of 1984/85, the country's resettlement programme was in crisis. RRC did not have an accurate census of the settler population. The impact of the programme on environment was not given serious consideration. Many of the large projects were doing poorly despite considerable state support. Between 1977 and 1984, the government's budgetary allocations for capital expenditure for resettlement came to about 290 million Birr, of which the high cost projects in Wollega, the Awash Valley (and Gode) and Harewa absorbed close to 68% (Negarit Gazeta, Budget Proclamations). By the end of 1983, RRC's employees involved in settlement work made up about 32% of the agency's total work force (MoA/FAO 1985: 28). In addition, resettlement was supported by the services of the Ministries of Agriculture, Construction and Health, and the Water Resources Authority, to name but a few; the costs of these agencies did not appear in RRC records but they were not unknown to state authorities. On the basis of the cost estimates given in MoA/FAO 1985 (see above), and the budgetary allocations noted earlier, we estimate the cost of operating the existing projects in the period between 1979 and 1984 to be about 320 million Birr. This is the estimate of what it cost the government to run its various programmes and does not include capital and other assistance provided to resettlement by donor agencies.

It is evident from the available records that crop yields on both

special and low cost resettlement schemes were considerably lower than the national average for peasant farms. RRC and other agencies have often given the impression that productivity in settlement is quite high and the economic prospects for settlers very promising. However, the evidence contradicts this. Crop yield on both types of settlement schemes in 1977/78 was lower than the national average by 50% to 80% (FAO/UNDP 1980: 40); and all through the 1970s and early 1980s, few projects produced enough food to satisfy their our needs. On the eve of the 1984 famine, resettlement schemes were working about 0.3% of the cultivated area of the country and their contribution to total agricultural production in 1983 was a trifling 0.2% (ONCCP 1984c: 162).

Much of the blame on this poor state of affairs has been put on RRC. The main criticisms levelled at it have been that no clear separation was made between relief and resettlement work, and the agency had conducted its settlement operations as part of its general work of relief and rehabilitation (ONCCP 1984a; FAO/UNDP 1983). In general, resettlement in this period failed to live up to its expectations. It had absolutely no impact on the unemployment problem in the urban areas, and did little to ease the agricultural or environmental crises facing the country at the time. Indeed, there is reason to believe that the damage caused by resettlement far outweighs its benefits, and the vast resources wasted on the various programmes would have been more profitably employed elsewhere.

The Resettlement Experience: Phase II (1985-1987)

The General Context

We need to look briefly at the context within which the second phase of resettlement, which was launched at the end of 1984, was conceived and implemented. While, in general terms, the diversity of the objectives of resettlement remained unchanged, greater emphasis was given to the rehabilitative aspects of the programme, as the country became more and more deeply shaken by food shortages and environmental crisis. Even though there were very few success stories, resettlement began to assume far greater importance than previously, and policy documents began to place it within the overall programme of socialist transformation pursued

by the government. The view frequently encountered now was that the socialization of the rural economy was to be a package of major programmes consisting of collectivization of agriculture, villagization, state control of grain marketing, and resettlement. The prospects for resettlement were now seen to be brighter, and this called for greater urgency and greater commitment.

The evaluation of the first phase of resettlement, a task that was conducted in preparation for the Ten-Year Plan, was not generally complimentary. Most of the documents concerned admitted that costs were high, and the organization and management of programmes needed improvements. More careful planning and advance preparation was said to be necessary, although what this involved was not spelt out in detail. However, what many of the evaluations failed to consider was the mood and attitude of the settler population. Among some officials, particularly at the provincial and lower levels, there was great confidence that once hungry and destitute peasants were relocated in the fertile and virgin lands in the south and south-west- lands which they believed to be in abundance- they would be grateful to the government. This may explain in part the over-zealous methods used by some local officials to recruit resettlers in the famine areas in 1984/85.

The Ten-Year Plan attempted to promote a fairly cautious and slow-paced resettlement policy for the years up-to 1993 (PMAC 1984: 154-229); this contrasts sharply with the greater urgency implied in policy documents from higher circles of government. The planning authorities wished to proceed without the shortcomings of the previous years, and they urged more careful selection of settlement sites and settlers, greater planning and better preparation of social infrastructure. This is of course easier said than done. The plan document recommends three types of settlement models, and these are called conventional, rapid (*fetan*) and integrated settlements; of the three, rapid settlements, which would require far less investment than conventional ones, were to absorb some 66% of the resettler population projected in the ten year period. In this same period, the government was to resettle 194 000 household (854 000 persons), and to spend 153 million Birr for new programmes. This investment (about 2.9% of total planned investment) was modest compared to the objectives to be achieved, but the strategy was to de-emphasize high profile schemes and to rely more on low costing and

rapidly developing schemes.

All through the early 1980s, rural society was in the throes of a deepening crisis. Except for one or two years, peasant production had a lacklustre record in the post-revolution period, and the collectivized sector of rural production was performing very poorly. The food situation had deteriorated considerably since 1976, and the rate of population growth had outpaced per capita food production leading, among other things, to a decline in per capita grain consumption in the countryside. The positive effects of the land reform having exhausted themselves in 1975/76, the rest of the decade and the early 1980s were marked by agricultural stagnation and greater social instability in the rural areas. In many parts of the country, and especially in the famine prone areas, rural society was subjected to prolonged and acute pressure arising from insurgency and war, land scarcity and poor harvests, environmental distress and the loss of natural resources.

The real de-stabilization of the peasantry begins in earnest in 1977/78 and reaches crisis proportions in 1984 with the famine of that year. In some areas of the north-east, 1977/78 was a famine year, and for many peasants in the region, the great tragedy actually began in 1982. According to RRC records, some 5.2 million peasants in the country were unable to support themselves and were in need of emergency aid in 1980, and that three years later, the number had gone up to 6.1 million. By the beginning of 1984, something like 16% of the rural population was absolutely destitute and threatened with death by starvation. In this same period, there were half a million refugees in the Sudan driven there by large-scale conflict in the north of the country, and nearly the same number of peasants in south-east Ethiopia had been dislocated by war with Somalia.

The drama of the 1984/85 famine is too complex to recount here; suffice it to say that the tragedy engulfed the whole of rural Ethiopia and was the cause of the loss of untold human lives and farm animals. In September 1984, RRC records indicated that some 15% of the peasant population were famine affected, in December of the same year the number was 21%, and early 1985 it had reached 27%. What makes this tragedy unique in many respects is that it affected not just the traditional famine prone areas but also areas that had had very little famine experience previously. Beginning in the early 1980s, the government's

radical agricultural policies were implemented more widely and at an accelerated pace. The government was engaged in several fronts, and the collectivization of agriculture, which was considered a prime political goal as well as a solution to the country's food problem, was promoted through the expansion of co-operatives, villagization, greater state control of the marketing and distribution of food, and the consolidation of state farms. The attempt to implement all these programmes simultaneously blurred the priorities in agricultural development work particularly at the local level. At the same time, the programmes became a cause of uncertainty and insecurity among the peasantry, which had only recently accommodated itself to the realities of land reform.

The massive resettlement of this period -perhaps the largest recorded effort of human relocation in the country's history- would not have been possible without the various rural reforms implemented in the previous ten years. The land reform abolished not only private ownership but also customary systems of land tenure; in effect, the state now became the real landowner, although the allotment of land to individuals was carried out by Peasant Associations (PAs). This made it possible and relatively easy for the state to alienate large tracts of land for settlement purposes. PAs provided an excellent opportunity for the mobilisation of populations on a large scale, and without the support and active participation of PAs, the selection of the mass of resettlers in Wollo, Tigrai and Shoa would have been impossible. On the eve of the massive resettlement, a high level decision was made to entrust the work of resettlement to a national committee headed by ESP, and to launch an accelerated and large scale settlement programme. Thus, the responsibility for resettlement was effectively taken out of the hands of RRC, thereby investing the task not just with great urgency but also with high political commitment.

Emergency Resettlement

Emergency resettlement was formally launched at the end of October 1984. The planned resettlement of the Ten-Year Plan was quietly replaced by the new programme that was largely the brainchild of the party authorities. An added objective of the new programme involved environmental issues: peasants were to be relocated not only for rehabilitation purposes but also to promote the conservation of resources

in the high population areas and the regeneration of the over-utilized lands. Such an environmental policy however cannot be fully compatible with one of encouraging sound land distribution which was also part of the resettlement objective, but the contradiction involved did not worry policy makers.

As is inevitable in any massive operation, emergency resettlement was plagued from the outset by confusion, disorganization and mismanagement. RRC's master plan as revealed in its public statement of October 1984, i.e. before the government's emergency policy was announced, was to settle 14,000 families in several parts of the country in the coming few years (RRC 1984b: 28). In November of the same year, government leaders announced plans to relocate 500,000 families (or about 2 million persons) from northern Ethiopia in other "not densely settled and agriculturally suitable" parts of the country. The programme was to be carried out in "a short period" (*Addis Zemen*, 17 November 1984). But both the Central Planning Committee and RRC were making hasty preparations to settle 300,000 families (or 1.2 persons). According to the latter agency, the programme was to be completed in two phases; in phase one 50,000 families were to be moved, and in phase two the remaining 250,000, and there was to be some time gap between the two (RRC 1984a: 24).

In the early reports prepared by the ONCCP as well as RRC, the settlers were identified as famine victims from Wollo, Tigrai and Gondar provinces only, and peasants from the latter province were to be involved in the second and last phase of the programme. There are no references to settlers from other parts of the country in RRC's documents in this period, while the ONCCP only makes a passing reference to the possibility of moving famine victims from north Shoa (RRC 1984a: 24; ONCCP 1984b: 5-6, and 24-5). At this point, there were no plans to resettle peasants affected by drought or suffering land hunger. In the latter part of 1985, more than half the settlers in Mettekel (western Gojjam) were from areas that were not considered in the original plans of emergency resettlement, viz. southern Shoa.

The planning authorities estimated that the cost of moving more than 1.2 million peasants would be about 125.7 million Birr, of which some 75% would be to pay for the purchase of farm implements and oxen for the resettlers. This figure was arrived at by grossly under estimating the

cost of site preparation and infrastructure, and excluding altogether that of food and other subsistence support to settlers. The same authorities stated that the new programme would bring under cultivation 300 000 hectares of land mainly in the three south-western provinces, viz., Wollega, Illubabor, and Kaffa (ONCCP b: 31, 24); the new projects also included settlements in western Gojjam and western Gondar. Again, the latter figure was arrived not through some sort of credible inventory of the available land resources in the country, but rather arbitrarily; there were 300,000 settler families involved and so planners decided to allocate one hectare of land to each.

New resettlement sites were selected and opened with great haste and with environmentally damaging consequences. The huge project in Mettekel *awraja* was launched without any proper feasibility study. In fact, the selection of settlement sites in Mettekel was made by local authorities on the basis of a brief helicopter flight over the *awraja* (see Dessalegn 1988b). The Gambella settlement scheme was given the go ahead despite the fact that RRC had previously closed its own programme there because of high costs and the unsuitability of the area to highland peasant agriculture. Further, almost all of the new projects hastily opened up were located in hot and semiarid lowland areas infested with malaria, trypanosomiasis, yellow fever and other endemic diseases to which highland peasants are not immune.

The process of settler selection, which was conducted by local committees headed by local ESP officials, was disastrous to say the least. The methods used to recruit candidates varied widely from place to place, nevertheless, they were, in a large number of cases, neither based on voluntary consent nor were free and fair. As has been shown in recent documents prepared for the Council of Ministers, selection committees used forceful or unethical methods in a large number of places. Peasants were either rounded up and sent to transit camps, or falsely enticed into the programme. In Wollo, for example, the local authorities simply assigned a fix quota of settlers to each administrative unit, and the task of collecting the required number of peasants was given to local PAs (Dessalegn 1987: 126ff). Peasants were given the most minimal information about resettlement and that only the most positive. The timing as well as the site of recruitment was also unethically chosen: settler candidates were recruited in relief camps, or as they arrived at feeding

centres, at the worst point in the famine. Some of those peasants who decided to try resettlement did so as an act of desperation or a last resort measure (Council of Ministers 1988b: 73-74).

Later, settlement was employed as a form of punishment by local officials, as a means of settling personal grudges by PAs, or as a way of frightening peasants to pay their taxes or participate in communal work projects (*ibid*: 122-23). At this point, the attitude of peasants to resettlement had hardened. In a survey conducted in Wollo in the fall of 1986, we found that less than 2% of peasants were willing to consider resettlement if another serious famine was to occur again (Dessalegn 1987: 193). Another survey conducted a year later in the same province reveals a more heightened hostility to the programme. It states that there were "numerous attacks on peasant association leaders and extension agents who were involved in recruitment"; there were no cases of peasants willing to try resettlement under any circumstances (Alemneh 1988: 104). By this time, thousands of peasants had returned from the resettlement camps, and, in the words of the Council of Ministers' report noted above, had given "resettlement a bad image".

If recruitment was a disaster, relocation (i.e., the collection and transportation of settlers to their destinations) was tragic. In each *woreda,* there were collection centres, and settlers were "posted" in stages to the main centre for the long haul to the various project areas. Peasants did not reach their destinations in one day; the whole trip took anywhere from five to seven days, and along the way there were camps where peasants had to stay overnight. Conditions at each collection or posting point, where peasants had to stay waiting for transportation, were deplorable: there were hardly any food available; shelter conditions in general and sanitation conditions in particular were very poor, and numerous deaths occurred as a result. Worse still, thousands of peasant families were separated in all manner of ways; the number of children found abandoned at each of the transit points and at the project sites runs in the tens of thousands, and the work of re-unifying them with their relatives is still going on today. Such was the confusion during the relocation process that resettlers did not know where they were being taken. At the collection centres at the *woreda* level, they would perhaps be told that they would be travelling to Mettekel, at the main posting centre this may be changed to Gambella, and they may finally find themselves in Qetto in Wollega. In

Mettekel *awraja*, for example, local officials were informed that the first batch of settlers would be from Wollo and Tigrai, but at the appointed day several thousand peasants from Kembatta and Hadiya showed up to be resettled. The first group of settlers from Wollo did not arrive at the project until three months later (Dessalegn 1988b).

Because of the scale of operations and the speed with which it was carried out, the old resettlement model was found to be inadequate, and a new one had to be drawn up. The new model consisted of conventional settlements, which were large scale projects requiring considerable capital investment, settlements articulated to existing projects, and integrated settlements which were schemes which offered settlers access to unutilized lands available in peasant associations. The major large-scale settlements opened up in this period were Mettekel, Gambella, and Qetto (in Qellem *awraja*), and Jarso (Ghimbi *awraja*), both in Wollega. Existing projects such as Assossa, Mettema (western Gondar province), and Anger and Diddessa in Wollega were expanded to take in new settlers. It is estimated that 1500 PAs were involved in the integrated settlement schemes (or *sigsig*, as it was called), mainly in Wollega, Kaffa and Illubabor provinces. However, not much is known about them, and some of the peasants involved were "lost" to the service-giving agencies of the government (Council of Ministers 1988a: 74ff). Here again, it is not clear how the integrated sites were selected; it would require months of painstaking fieldwork to identify PAs which possessed unutilized land particularly in such high population density areas as Kaffa.

The redistribution of the population in the various schemes is given in Annex 2. By the end of 1987, a total of over 600 000 people may have been moved to the receiving areas most of which were located in the southwestern provinces. This immense redistribution of population involved 1.6% of the country's rural population, and the population of the receiving areas was inflated by as much as 17% in Illubabor, over 12% in Wollega, and 3% in Kaffa. Over 11% of the rural population of Wollo was resettled. Of the total resettlers in this period, about 63% were from Wollo, 18% from north and south Shoa, and 15% from Tigrai. Approximately 43% of the resettlers went to Wollega, 25% to Illubabor, 17% to Mettekel, and 13% to Kaffa. The distribution of settlers is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Redistribution of Population 1985-87

Sending Areas		Receiving Areas (% of Settlers)
Wollo(Wl):	376 290	Wollega: 274 085 (Wl:87%, Tg:8%,Sh:5%)
Tigrai(Tg):	86 460	Illubabor: 150 939 (Wl:49,Tg:31,Sh:19)
Shoa(Sh):	108 244	Kaffa: 64 660 (Wl:64,Tg:28,Sh:8)
Gojjam(Goj):	16 425	Gojjam: 101 123 (Wl:21,Sh:50,Goj:16,Gon:13)
Gondar(Gon):	19 687	Gondar: 6387 (Gon:100)
Shoa: 6149		(Sh:100)
Total:	*607 106*	*603 343*

***Source*:** RPOWE 1985, RPONE 1987.

As was noted above, because of the poor and arbitrary manner of recruitment, the profile of the settler population does not compare well with the distribution of population in the famine areas. The selection process was evidently seriously affected by accessibility of peasants to the authorities, and more peasants were collected and sent to resettlement from areas of easy access. In Wollo, for example, the *awrajas* with good accessibility are Dessie Zuria, Qallu, Ambassel, Yejju and Wadla Delanta, and these provided the largest number of resettlers; on the other hand the *awrajas* which were the most seriously hit by famine were Raya Qobbo, Wag, Qallu and Yejju. Dessie Zuria, which provided the largest number of resettlers (23% of the provincial total), was one of the lesser-

affected areas in Wollo. In Tigrai, the *awrajas* of Raya Azebo and Enderta, the two most accessible in the province, provided more than two-thirds of Tigrai settlers; the two *awrajas* had a combined drought affected population of less than one-third of the province total.

It is interesting that the number of settlers dispatched from the sending areas and that found in the settlements in the receiving areas does not quite match for the years 1985/86 and 1986/87 (the figures in Table 2.2 are cumulative aggregates and do not reveal the real picture). In the former year, the number of households found in settlement is 20% less than that recorded as having been moved from the sending areas. The 20% difference may reflect the high rate of deaths and desertions that occurred in that year (ONCCP 1988a: 102-104); we shall return to this point later. It is worth noting that the family size recorded for settlers in this period is very low by national standards, and decreases with the distance travelled. According to our calculations, the average household size for Tigrai settlers was 2.2, that for Wollo 2.9, for Shoa 3.2 and Gojjam 3.5 (this gives a mean of 2.8). This may reflect differences in recruitment methods. Officials in Wollo and Tigrai may have employed more unethical methods of selection, or they may have been greater family separations.

The major reason given for emergency resettlement was to introduce rational land allocation system and sound land use practices. The argument has been that the famine areas of the north are densely populated, family land holdings are therefore minuscule, and productivity is either stagnating or decreasing steadily. The under-utilized land resources in the southwest therefore provide ample opportunities for greater per capita holdings and therefore higher productivity. These arguments do not, however, square with the reality of resettlement. In the south-western provinces, the total land brought under cultivation by the new programme in 1985 was reported to be 67,000 hectares; this provides an average per capita holding of less than 0.5 hectares for settlers. Among the integrated and therefore individual cultivating settlers, average holdings measured 0.26 hectares in Kaffa, 0.71 in Illubabor, and 0.38 in Wollega (RPOWE 1985: 17-21). A few years later, another study showed that land 'holdings' per settler household in the conventional schemes measured 0.97 hectares, in schemes articulated with existing settlements 1.12, and in integrated schemes 0.85 (Council of Ministers 1988 A: 174).

The point worth noting at this point is that except for the land-less and the absolutely destitute, a majority of settler peasants were better off in their original homes in terms of plot size and quality of agricultural land. Further, the *awrajas* of Kaffa, Limmu and Jimma in Kaffa province, where 70% of the integrated settlements in the province were located are more densely populated than the *awrajas* of Wollo, Tigrai and north Shoa. Indeed, Jimma *awraja* alone has more population (almost one million in 1987) than Wollo's three hardest hit *awrajas* of Raya Qobbo, Qallu and Yejju *combined*.

The first year of resettlement was a traumatic one for almost all peasants involved. All the large-scale settlements and most of the integrated ones were in areas that are environmentally unsuited to highland peasants, and as a result there were large numbers of deaths, particularly in the early months. Based on RRC's records in Pawie (Mettekel), Sivini (1986) has estimated a crude death rate of 21.9% in the first year of the project (national rate 2.2%). While on assignment in Mettekel in 1985, this writer was informed by peasant settlement leaders that large numbers of settlers were dying every day in almost all villages. On some occasions, the daily deaths were so many that all were buried in mass graves. In any operation involving mass crowding and unfamiliar surroundings there is increased vulnerability to health hazards due to communicable and vector-borne diseases. All the hazards to high mortality were in evidence during the relocation process: there were breakdowns in existing health infrastructure, inadequate sanitation and water, malnutrition because of insufficiency of food, inadequate shelter, and mass crowding. In the settlement projects themselves peasants were exposed to a variety of new diseases to which they were not immune (for a discussion of health hazards in resettlement, see PEEM 1986, Shears and Lusty 1987). The south-western lowland areas, in which a majority of settlers were relocated, contain diseases such as endemic malaria, endemic yellow fever, trypanosomiasis, and river blindness, all of which are hazardous to the new settlers and their livestock (see Kloos 1989). It is too early to measure the consequences of the exposure of the settler population to health hazards to which they have no defences, but as the written evidence indicates the long-term impact is certainly serious and costly.

As was to be expected, the emergency programme turned out to be

flawed and is at present floundering in uncharted waters. As most of the reports commissioned by various government agencies point out, peasants involved in the programme are unsettled, uncertain and highly discontented. In many of the medium and low cost projects, there has been very poor selection of settlement locations, which often have turned out to be unsuitable for human habitation, agriculture, or for livestock. On a number of occasions, integrated settlers were provided slope land, land subject to water logging, or land with poor soils. In Kaffa the authorities in the regional office of MoA found that a large number of schemes were poorly organized, with low prospects for sustainable agriculture. A high proportion of settlers here was unable to work for a variety of reasons including old age, and physical handicaps. There was in addition great hostility among settlers in the large projects to the co-operative form of agricultural organization, and these schemes were in worse condition than most other schemes. Such has been the dissatisfaction of settlers that the rate of desertions has remained high for the last three years (Western Zonal Office of MoA 1988: 15ff).

While doing fieldwork in Wollo in 1986 for an earlier study, we were informed that a large number of peasants from the province had returned from resettlement. According to the Ambassel *awraja* ESP chief, some 10% of the *awraja* peasants sent to resettlement had returned by the middle of 1986. The official pointed out that a majority of the peasants concerned had been involved in integrated settlement schemes, and had abandoned their 'new homes' because of the hostility shown them by the local population. Recent documents also show that hostility has been a factor in desertions of integrated settlers (Council of Ministers 1988 b: 122-3). A *woreda* PA official in the same province informed us that returnees had told him they had abandoned the settlement schemes mainly because they had suffered hunger. From the oral information provided us at time, we estimated that by the end of 1986 some 10 to 12% of the Wollo peasantry involved in emergency resettlement had returned to the province. At the time, a good number of returnees had been re-instated in their old PAs. Indeed, in some communities the returnees were treated as heroes and offered a variety of assistance and support by the people to enable them to establish themselves.

It is virtually impossible at the moment to determine accurately the magnitude of settler desertions in the period under review. Peasants began

to abandon the programme right from the moment of arrival, and the rate of turnover remained high throughout the first year despite the fact that the programme officials took stringent measures to make desertions difficult. According documents prepared for the Council of Ministers (1988a, b), serious mismanagement of projects, unresolved insecurity and uncertainty of settlers, and unpopular work arrangements (especially co-operatives) continue to keep the rate of turnover unnecessarily high. Table 3 provides an estimate of deaths and desertions in the period under discussion.

Table 3. Settler Deaths and Desertions (1985-87)

	Head	Dependents	Total
Total settlers	205 684	388 506	594 190
Deaths+Desertions	60 106	56 662	116 768
(Percent	*29*	*16*	*20*)
Deaths	11 354	21 446	32 800
Desertions	48 752	35 216	83 968
(Percent	*24*	*9*	*14)*

***Note*:** Deaths in transit are not included
***Source*:** Council of Ministers 1988a: 251.

A deeper analysis of settlement desertions is difficult because of the dearth of information, however, it is evident that desertion has occurred in all projects and in all geographical regions. From all accounts, integrated settlements were doing very badly, and the reception given to the new comers by local inhabitants ranged from serious hostility to indifference, and a considerable number of peasants left to return home, or to seek employment elsewhere. In the larger projects, abandonment has been made difficult because there are no free movement of settlers within or out of the projects (Council of Ministers A: 173). In Mettekel in 1985, for example, peasants could visit relatives or friends in another village either surreptitiously or by special permission of the settler authorities only. In

Anger Gutin, which has a large population of urban settlers and also a very high rate of turn-over, agricultural work is done under armed guard (*ibid*: 81). Despite these efforts, however, large numbers of peasants have managed to abandon the programme since 1985.

Just as in the previous period, the reasons for the high rate of turnover vary from place to place and from scheme to scheme. Integrated settlers abandoned the programme because of the hostile reception of the local population, poor land allotment and unfavourable climatic conditions. In the large projects, the high turnover is attributed to the disaffection of settlers with the co-operative form of agriculture in force and to climatic conditions; additionally, settlers suffered ill health, privation and hunger. In all settlement schemes, large-scale defections occurred because the programme was not based on voluntary choice, because of a high level of family separations, and the refusal by settlers to pay the high personal price required of them (Council of Ministers 1988a: 84ff; 1988b: 122-3; Western Zonal Office of MoA: 15ff).

There is some indication that stability is returning to some of the settlements, however, desertions are still going on, and settler confidence has not been fully restored. The ones who have left the projects have usually been the young, the hard working and the more aggressive, and those who have stayed are the older elements. If this trend continues, a stable settler population will emerge only after children born in settlements grow up to be working in them; they will be able to break the psychological and emotional links their parents maintained with their place of origin.

Resources, Costs and Benefits

Resources

From the mid-1960s up-to the present, resettlement has been undertaken with the assumption that there are sufficient agricultural resources to accommodate a large number of settlers. However, there has not been to date a sound and reliable inventory of the resource potential of the country. Government agencies and foreign specialists commissioned for the purpose have each provided their own self-serving estimations of resources, based frequently on guesswork or unsound methodology.

In the post-revolution period there has been a tendency to inflate the magnitude of the “under-utilized” lands of the country, but the evidence to support these claims has been unconvincing. In the early 1980s, a government technical team charged with assessing the prospects for resettlement proposed that the unused or under-utilized land of the country suitable for agriculture amounted to some 54% of the country's land surface; this would come to about 70 million hectares. It pointed out that there were 3 million hectares of land suitable for irrigated farming of which only 3% was now utilized. No credible evidence was offered for both these claims. Several pages later in the same report, however, it is stated that land available for immediate settlement amounted to 532,000 hectares and this was thought to be sufficient for half a million settlers (PMAC 1983: 45, 95).

Earlier, at the end of the first year of the revolution, a foreign consultant commissioned by UNDP and FAO prepared a feasibility study for RRC on the land and settlement potential of the country. The study, which purported to be a definitive one, pointed out that up-to 80% of the settlement lands were located in the south-western provinces, specifically in the lowland areas of Wollega and Illubabor, and urged that effort should be made to develop them for, among other things, settlement. It claimed that there was a total of 1.18 million hectares of land available for this purpose of which 580,000 hectares was high quality land which could be brought under cultivation with very little investment. This estimate was based mainly on climatic assessment (Harberd 1975). I call this method of assessment 'limited physical factor' assessment.

Another effort along these lines is found in another consultant report prepared for the same two international agencies (FAO/UNDP 1984); this was not however made with resettlement in mind. The area calculations in this case are mostly based on map frames of the country prepared through satellite imagery. According to the authors, slightly over 3% of the land area of the country (or about 5 million hectares) are unutilized and could be brought under cultivation with low to moderate investment; land and water development were all that would be needed for peasant based agriculture on these lands. RRC claims to have conducted numerous surveys to identify settlement areas in all parts of the country. On the eve of the massive emergency resettlement the agency was able to identify a mere 28,410 hectares of land suitable for settlement purposes in eight of

the country's provinces (RRC 1984 B: 28).

In the absence of a sound and scientific inventory of the resource potential for resettlement one ought to ask what many may consider a heretical question, namely does the country really have under-utilized land suitable for large-scale settlement purposes? This question can only be dealt with objectively if planners and investigators do agree on a common definition of the terms “under-utilized” and “suitable” land in the context of existing conditions. This common understanding will be furthered if a clear and scientific analysis is made of the traditional settlement patterns of both the crop-dependent peasantry of the highlands as well as the transient populations of the periphery. The question, why has the highland peasantry shunned the lowland areas of the country, and why have the peasants of the southwestern provinces failed to utilize the lands that are said to be rich and abundant has yet to be dealt with seriously and objectively.

All the major settlement projects are located in predominantly marginal areas, marginal in terms of land and soil quality, and of climate and environment. These lands possess soil types that require water development schemes for many cereal crops, otherwise their fertility cannot be sustained for long without high inputs of chemical fertilizers. Further, the rainfall regimen either is irregular, untimely, or over-abundant for a large variety of cereal crops (Daniel 1988; see also Daniel 1983). In the majority of the settlement areas, the climatic conditions are such that a great number of highland peasants accustomed to living in a less hot and humid environment have found it difficult to cope, and some have deserted the projects for this reason. As was noted earlier, the areas are infested with malaria, tsetse borne diseases, yellow fever, and other fatal health hazards which have already claimed the lives of a large number of settlers. It is also curious that the rich and abundant lands claimed by settlement planners seem to have disappeared since a large proportion of settlers could only be accommodated on minuscule holdings and on land which is poor in quality, and subject to water logging (see above).

Related to this are the environmental implications of large-scale land clearance and deforestation in areas that have hitherto not supported crop-based agriculture. The most serious environmental hazard is land degradation: soil and water loss, loss of soil nutrients and biological

degradation. Coupled with this is the loss of wild life, and loss of valuable forest resources. The soils of the south-western lowlands "have their nutrients concentrated in their uppermost parts compared to the soils of northern Ethiopia in which nutrients are distributed more evenly in their profiles" (Daniel 1988), and cultivation which leads to soil loss has serious consequences unless supported by high levels of fertilization. According to another specialist (Hurni 1988), soil loss in the uncultivated areas of the country, part of which falls within the settlement zones under discussion, measures 75 tons per hectare per year; this compares with 42 tons per hectare per year for the northern highlands. The region contributes 29% of the total soil loss of the country; every year the region loses 439 million tons of soil. This estimation was made before parts of the area was settled and the land brought under cultivation which will lead to higher level of resource degradation.

We do not have reliable estimations of the magnitude of land degradation in settlement areas at the moment, nevertheless, there is some evidence that the environmental impact of crop cultivation is serious and growing (Council of Ministers 1988a: 159ff). In most of the conventional and special settlement schemes, clearing and stripping forestland is continuing at an alarming rate. Most of the country's remaining forest is located in the southwest, and this is the last refuge of much of the country's wild life that includes some rare and valuable species of animals and birds. The development of these lands will be disastrous to wild life which may either be killed or be lost to neighbouring countries. Land clearance and degradation also involves radical alterations of the flora and fauna, and high levels of pollution. While these have serious adverse consequences for the economic potential of the region, their most significant effects will be on humans, particularly human health. We shall return to this point later.

Finally, it should be remembered that resettlement in this country has always meant the transfer of peasants to a new surrounding; it has not involved changing the latter's agricultural skills, habits and environmental knowledge. This means that the peasant will merely reproduce his unsound agricultural and environmental practices in his new settlement, and in the end both he and society will be the poorer for it.

The weakness of the land assessments of the past was that they employed what I have called limited factor criteria. Such methods are

incomplete and misleading because they do not accommodate the complex needs of resettlement. Resettlement, it should be stressed, is not a physical operation but a human project, and the human dimension, which has been excluded or glossed over in the past, must always be emphasized. All assessments of settlement potential must therefore be multifaceted, and should involve agro-climatic, human and social, technical and environmental factors.

The dynamics of resettlement require a careful and thorough evaluation of resource potentials available for use by a particular population. One may identify land as being suitable for settlement if it meets the following requirements:

- if it is habitable, i.e. if it does not involve a complex and costly health infrastructure;
- if it can be worked with the existing technology of the population concerned, or it only requires small-scale and cost effective improved technology;
- if the productivity of the land can be sustained over a reasonably long period without requiring heavy capital investment;
- if the cultivation of the land does not involve serious environmental changes damaging to the region and/or to the population in it;
- and if it does not deprive the indigenous population access to resources customarily utilized by them, and/or does not give rise to serious competition over resources between them and the settlers.

This is not a universal definition but one adapted to the needs of this country. Had the tasks of resource assessment been conducted along these lines the estimates or projections of the past would have been more modest, and the expectation of policy makers would likewise have been kept within reasonable bounds.

Costs

Let us move on to discuss the costs that have been incurred during the phase of emergency resettlement. This is a subject on which a general consensus is difficult to arrive at, partly because the cost elements necessary for this purpose are not always on record, and RRC's documentation of financial matters leaves a lot of yawning gaps. One is

therefore treading on rough ground, and the best effort may only yield a general scale of magnitude rather than precise measurements. According to my own calculations which are based on the cost estimate provided in MoA/FAO 1985, emergency resettlement has probably cost the government about 600 million Birr in the period 1985 to 1987. In this same period, the cost of operations in Mettekel and Gambella, two of the four large projects opened up during emergency, comes to 242 and 177 million Birr respectively. The report prepared for the Council of Ministers (1988a: 125) reveals that the cost of settlement from 1985 to 1988 totals 564.5 million Birr; this includes the Tana-Belles project, a cost element that is usually included. According to a report from the planning agency, total government investment in resettlement in the period 1986-88 amounts to 471 million Birr (ONCCP 1988a: 114). These three samples are enough to indicate the magnitude of resources allocated to emergency resettlement in the three years of its operation.

For planning and evaluation purposes it may be more useful to examine the cost breakdowns of individual project over a period of time. Where detailed information is available one can arrange the breakdowns according to one's objectives. In the standard literature the cost components which are often examined for evaluation purposes are capital outlays and infrastructure, subsistence support and contingencies, agricultural development support, social services, and administration and manpower. For comparative purposes, the average cost breakdown of World Bank assisted settlement projects in the 1970s appears as follows: capital and infrastructure costs, 25% of total costs; price and physical contingencies, 22%; agricultural development, 33%; social services, 6%; and, manpower and administration, 14% (World Bank 1977: 33). Such a cost profile suggests that projects will live upto expectations, though it is not a guarantee of success.

Table 4 shows a cost breakdown of Assossa resettlement in the pre-emergency period, not a typical project to be sure, but significant for our purposes because it is one of the oldest mechanized projects to be launched in the post-revolution period. Unfortunately we do not have comparable figures for other projects in the emergency period. (For comparative purposes we have included the cost projection prepared by RRC for the Belles projects, 1981.) By 1983, Assossa possessed land measuring 21,600 hectares (not all of it cultivated), a population of 7,000

families or 22,400 persons.

Table 4. Cost Estimates for Assossa Settlement 1979-1984 (Belles Project Costs, %)

Cost	Million Birr	%	Belles %
Capital & Land Clearance	19.5	31	20
Bldgs. & Civil Works	3.2	5	22
Settler transport	1.4	2	ng
Food & Subsistence	15.0	24	19
Agric. Production	9.7	16	27
Health & Other Serv.	9.5	15	8
Manpower & Adm.	3.7	6	4
Total	*62.0*	*100*	*100*

Cost per family	8,856 Birr
Cost per person	2,768 Birr

***Source*:** RRC unpublished internal reports for Assossa and RRC 1981 C for Belles. (ng = negligible)

In World Bank assisted projects, manpower and administration costs are quite high in comparison to the figures shown above. However, the MoA/FAO study noted earlier shows that for high cost settlements nearly 40% and for low cost ones 58% of total cost goes for manpower and administration. This estimate may be a little too high, whereas the manpower costs given above may be a little too low. The difference in the cost profile of Assossa and World Bank projects is the following: 1) that there are greater social service costs in local projects. Medical costs in Assossa amounted to 8.3 million Birr or 13% of total costs. The greater health costs reflects greater health hazards in the project areas. 2) Greater capital and infrastructure costs. In Assossa, this component amounted to 36% of total costs, in Belles 42%, far higher than many World Bank

projects. 3) Greater dependency of settlers on outside help. Settlers in World Bank projects are offered price support, credit and contingency assistance, and direct food aid is either uncommon or comparatively low. In contrast, Ethiopian projects contain a high element of life support assistance, a reflection of the fact that settlers come in a highly destitute condition.

It will thus come as no surprise that a majority of resettlement projects, including those that were launched in the pre-revolution period are still dependent on government support, although the level of such support has declined in some projects or remained static in others. Thus, a decade after (in the case of pre-revolution projects the time span is much longer) the issue of 'self-reliance' remains just as pressing as it was in the beginning. As of 1987, the major high profile schemes that were still dependent on government budgetary support were Harewa (10 units), Assossa (16 units), Anger Gutin (3 units), Awash Valley and Gode (9 units), and Taddelle-Harole (all units); in addition a number of special and medium cost schemes still depend on state subsidy (ONCCP 1987: 1; Council of Ministers 1988a: 104). There is no comparable report for the big emergency settlements such as Mettekel, Gambella, Qeto and Jarso, but if past experience is anything to go by these will also remain dependent for many years to come.

The methods used in the evaluation of resettlements vary in accordance with the objectives sought and the volume of information available. In the standard literature, the quantitative approach (i.e., costs, efficiency, income, etc.) is more prevalent (Nelson 1973, Roider 1971), but there have been cases where the sociological or comparative has been preferred (Moris 1968, Oberai 1986 respectively). In each case, the attempt is to measure in quantitative or qualitative terms whether resettlement has fulfilled its objectives, and whether the capital and human investments involved have been worthwhile. There is of course no single universal formula for this kind of evaluation, nevertheless, the ultimate yardstick should be whether settlers have achieved surplus production, and whether they are now better off than they were in their original homes. This goal will be achieved if one employs accepted and objective criteria of measurement of food production, income, social welfare and long term sustainability of assets in settlement areas. One should also be able to determine to what extent settlers have reproduced

the harmful agricultural practices that drove them out of their original homes in the first place.

Benefits

RRC has invariably given a rosy picture of economic performance in settlement areas, but a closer reading of its own records shows that the situation is, on the contrary, of grave concern (see below). A document prepared for ONCCP (1988a: 109, 104) argues that the resettlement programme has met its stated objectives in terms of improving food production, and of providing employment opportunities to the rural and urban poor. However, the evidence tells a different story. According to the figures provided in the document (: 114), crop yield in large projects stood at 3.7 quintals per hectare in 1984/85, rose to 8.9 quintals per hectare in 1985/86, 10.2 in 1986/87, and was estimated to reach 10.3 the following season. While this does show a rising trend in productivity, it also shows that the projects have yet to reach the level attained by the average peasant farm in the non-settlement areas. According to another official document (Council Ministers 1988a: 104-105), many of the large projects and a good number of the medium ones were doing very badly in the 1980s. The best crop yield reached was in 1986/87, when it was 11.0 quintals per hectare in Assossa, 12.1 in Anger Gutin, and 9.4 in Teddelle. At the same time, irrigated schemes in the Awash Valley showed crop yields that were half of those of rain-fed settlements in other areas. Most of these figures do not compare well with those achieved by private peasant farms.

More detailed evidence comes from one of RRC's recent publications. The data shown in Table 5 is for the main large-scale and modern projects for the years 1979/80 to 1986/87; for comparative purposes we have included average yield figures for peasants in Wollo.

Table 5. Land & Crop Production, Main Settlements (Wollo Average Crop Yield)

Year	Area Farmed (Ha.)	Produc'n (Qn.)	Yield (qn/ha)	Wollo Yield (qn/ha)
79/80	54 934	349 000	6.4	14.0
80/81	62 786	378 197	6.0	16.2
81/82	57 059	329 921	5.8	12.9
82/83	35 750	335 521	9.4	13.5
83/84	33 809	202 285	5.9	10.4
84/85*	24 963	150 209	6.0	3.9
85/86	31 494	255 081	8.1	9.3
86/87	29 613	249 853	8.4	11.2

***Note*: *This was the famine year, but settlements were only mildly affected.**
***Source*:** RRC 1988: Annex 8; CSA 1987a, b for Wollo.

The evidence suggests that the huge investment that has been sunk in resettlement appears to have been misallocated. As shown in Table 2.5, both gross food production and gross area farmed has been declining for the years for which information is available. If the accuracy of the raw data in RRC's records is not in question then one can say that the overall agricultural performance of resettlement projects is a matter for serious concern.

Resettlement and the Minority Population[5]

We are concerned here with the 'peripheral' people who inhabit the southwestern lowlands where many of the large-scale settlement projects

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[5] The evidence for this discussion is based on the author's own four week fieldwork in Mettekel in 1985, and also on: Bender 1981, 1976, 1975; Bunting 1984; Dessalegn 1988b; Donham and James 1986, 1980; Ellman 1972. For obvious reasons, we have left out the ethnographic literature.

have been established. Due to space limitations we shall not discuss the impact of resettlement on the majority Oromo and other populations in the region. Official policy has often assumed that the lands in the areas concerned are unutilized and therefore can be employed for settlement or other purposes. As we shall try to show in the pages that follow, this assumption is not fully justified. Even when the existence of local populations in project areas has been recognized, their interests have often been ignored. RRC documents, for example, have very little to say about the impact of the agency's projects on the local population, and what it intends to do to protect the livelihood of the peripheral people threatened by resettlement is not clear. The one major exception was an attempt to 'settle' the Annuak and Nuer in Gambella at the beginning of the 1980s, an attempt which was soon abandoned (RRC 1981b). Another perfunctory effort to consider development activity in what were called the "nomadic areas" of the country, which included the western periphery was discarded soon after the feasibility study was completed (UNDP/RRC 1984).

What we are proposing may be summed up as follows: a) that many of the lands in the south-west which now have been alienated for resettlement were *not* unutilized; b) that a large number of minority nationalities eke out a living on these lands using 'transitional' agricultural systems such as shifting cultivation, transhumance, and hunting and gathering; c) that the specific dynamics of such systems require large stretches of land which are periodically left fallow so that they may regenerate their fertility; and finally, d) that resettlement has unjustly appropriated the resources of the indigenous population whose economy and habitat is now threatened.

Our analysis would have been more complete if there was more written evidence on the subject than what is currently available. At the most basic level, there is uncertainty as to how many ethnic groups are involved, although the major groups affected by resettlement are fairly well known. The ethnic map of the region, for instance, prepared by Wendy James is somewhat different from that shown in Bender (Donham and James 1980: 40, Bender 1976: 298). Indeed, Bender himself in an earlier work shows a slightly different ethnic distribution and some of the groups shown in the latter work are missing (Bender 1975: 8). At times, confusion arises due to the fact that some of the groups concerned, who

are scattered in different areas are known to neighbours by different names; on occasions, the local majority population may refer to them by names which the people themselves may not acknowledge. For example, one of the groups which has been most seriously affected by resettlement is known as Shanqella in eastern Mettekel, Gumuz in western Mettekel and Mettema, Say in the Anger Diddessa region, but in many areas the people themselves use the name Begga.

The minority cultural groups under discussion are commonly referred to as Nilotic or Nilo-Saharan people, and of the many such groups in western and southwestern Ethiopia the following have in one way or another been affected by the numerous projects established since 1976.

*Mettema area: the Begga, though thinly spread out.
*Mettekel: mostly the Begga, but also the Shinasha.
*Assossa: in north and west, the Berta; in south and west, the Komo and the Kwama.
*Anger & Diddessa area: the Begga; the Mao.
*Southwestern Wollega: the Majangir; the Mao.
*Gambella area: Annuak; Nuer; on the Baro river near the Sudan, the Shita.
*South-central Illubabor: the Majangir (Motcha area).
*Southwestern Kaffa: the Me'en (also known as Meka, Tishena); the Sheko.

While it might be somewhat misleading to lump all these minority cultures together, it does make sense to look at them as a group because they do share some major socio-economic characteristics in common. To begin with they all stand in peripheral and subordinate relationship to the dominant populations in the highlands. They all maintain an agricultural system adapted to a marginal ecology, and have been able to maintain a balance between the needs of their economy and those of the environment. Most of the larger groups are engaged in shifting agriculture, others like the Nuer in transhumance, and still others are hunter-gatherers. For all of them, forest products, livestock, and fishing are important sources of supplementary income. Their agricultural technology is simple and rudimentary (the main one is the hoe or digging stick), and it is well suited to the delicate soils commonly found in their

ecology.

Both transhumance and shifting agriculture may be considered as 'transient' forms of production, and the essential element, which makes them different from others, is their particular land use system. To put it briefly, in the shifting system, each household works a current plot and leaves fallow a number of other plots so the land may recover from soil exhaustion. The current plot may only be worked for three or four years before it becomes exhausted at which point the household clears new land for cultivation. It may take anywhere between ten to fifteen years for fallowed land to regain its fertility. In short, in this system, a household's land resources are four to six times larger than what it is cultivating at a given time, although most of these resources are in fallow. Thus, a large portion of 'unused' or 'under-utilized' land in transient systems is land left fallow to be used again after a given lapse of time (see Bunting 1984 for the complexities of these systems).

The other common characteristic of the transient system is that the people involved practice customary forms of land tenure, and land per se is not a major source of social conflict. The government was acting more or less like European colonialists when it claimed that the lands in the region were utilized. Customary tenure involves group (or clan) ownership of a given area, and individual possessory rights over plots that the household manages to clear and prepare for cultivation. Possessory tenure is based on the principle of the first claimant, and two or more families may work a given plot at successive intervals.

Resettlement poses a threat to many of these marginalized people because it has alienated resources vital to their livelihood. These resources may include, depending on each project area, land, forest products, water and fishing rights, and traditional grazing grounds and access roads. Needless to say there are deep-seated cultural, linguistic and historical differences between the indigene population and the new comers, itself a potential cause of conflict under normal circumstances. Further, resettlement will exacerbate resentment among the indigenes because of what they consider to be the favoured treatment of settlers, who in comparison to themselves, appear as beneficiaries of government largess and special attention. This could in the long run give rise to hostility leading to social conflict involving both groups. In Mettekel in 1985, for instance, Begga attitude to the settlers and project activities was less than

cordial and incidents of conflict between the locals and the new comers was beginning to surface (Dessalegn 1988b).

Resettlement has been known to exacerbate inter-ethnic conflict in a number of countries, the most dramatic example of which was in the Philippines. The government's resettlement programme there encouraged Christian settlers to move into the so-called "unexplored" regions of the country which was inhabited by Moslem minority cultures. The tension between the two populations eventually led to the violent uprisings of the Moslems in the 1970s, which lasted for several years (Oberai 1986).

What makes the prospects for harmonious relations between the local inhabitants and the new comers in our case rather dim is that many of the former have kinsmen across the border in the Sudan; this is true, for instance, for the Begga, the Berta, the Kwama, Nuer and Annuak. While most of these groups have not yet developed a "national" identity (clan identity is far more common), the pressure from resettlement and the growing competition for resources may in the future promote aggressive forms of "national" consciousness. The chances that this may happen sooner than later are high because the southern and southeastern region of the Sudan, relevant to our discussion, has become politicized over ethno-religious issues. Finally, it may be worth noting that traditional historians of the indigenous populations probably remember well the long and bitter history of conflict between the periphery and the highland powers in the 19th and 20th centuries, conflicts which were essentially over resources and access to resources (see R. Pankhurst 1976; Johnson 1986).

We shall round off this discussion with a brief look at the consequences of large-scale resettlement on the health and habitat of the minority population6. Most of the discussion about communicable diseases and their transmission in the context of resettlement focuses on the hazards faced by an in-coming population to vector borne diseases in a new environment. Thus, environmental management often involves taking the appropriate measures to protect the migrant population (see PEEM 1986; Kloos 1989). The health hazards faced by the indigenous population due to the influx of a large population from outside and to

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[6] The discussion is based on Ford 1975; Hunter 1966; Kloos 1989, Knight 1971; Prothero 1965; Roundy 1976, 1975; Subra et.al. 1975; and Zein and Kloos 1988.

changes to its habitat are not seriously considered.

Let us first look at the kind of environmental changes that have occurred in the region. Deforestation and land clearance, has, as we saw earlier, led to accelerated soil and water erosion, and to the loss of wild life. Erosion tends to break up the soil and create large numbers of gullies and rills, which provide suitable breeding sites for river blindness vectors in the rainy season (see Hunter). Changes in the flora and fauna include removing the vegetative cover and growing grain and other crops on a large scale. Large areas are also cleared for housing and the building of villages, roads and other infrastructure. For agricultural and other purposes, the areas' water sources are tampered with, leading to changes in existing drainage systems and water flow patterns. On a number of occasions local inhabitants have been driven out of their habitat to make way for resettlement.

Environmental pollution is already taking place in many project areas and will grow to serious proportions soon. This will affect open fields, market areas, water and drainage systems. Large peasant populations living in congested villages will create unsanitary latrines, cesspools and refuse dumps containing organic matter that are ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes and other vectors. The settlers came from a wide variety of habitats and cultural backgrounds, and their customary sanitation practices therefore differ widely. Many of these practices will exacerbate environmental pollution unless the project authorities succeed in promoting a uniform code of sanitary behaviour.

The health risks that the settler population will bring with it involve mainly person-to-person transmitted and louse borne diseases, among which are smallpox, measles, whooping cough, trachoma, and typhus. Human contact between the two populations occurs in the market place, in the fields and public houses. In Mettekel, market interaction between the host and 'guest' populations is already quite brisk (Berterame and Magni 1988).

The indigenous population is placed in greater danger to existing health hazards because its ecologically adaptive practices will be put at risk. For example, transhumance, which is practised by the Nuer and other groups in the region, involves seasonal migration to higher and lower altitudes interchangeably. People move to high grounds during the rains when the tsetse fly is most active in lower altitudes, and return to

lower grounds in the drier months when the fly is least active. This is a protective measure as well as a rational land use system (see Knight, Ellman). As settlement projects expand in areas traditionally employed by transhumant populations, it will infringe on the latter's resources and will endanger their traditional protective practices.

The Begga in Mettekel do not raise large herds of cattle, nor are livestock kept close to dwellings; instead, the animals are left to roam around far from the homestead. The advantage of this practice is that since domestic animals are hosts for trypanosomiasis, the greater the distance between livestock and dwellings the lesser the vector-man contact (see Subra, et al. 1975). As settlement projects squeeze the Begga they may be left with no choice but to change their customary ways which will involve greater health risks.

Large-scale environmental changes will also give rise to a variety of health hazards to the minority population (Roundy 1975). Land clearance has been used as a check against the spread of sleeping sickness because the tsetse fly does not occur or breed where there is very little tree growth. However, when deforestation occurs it will promote the spread of schistosomiasis because the host animal, the snail, whose breeding is impeded by tree shadows, will breed more actively. Similarly, clearing the forest cover will allow the fly vector of the disease leishmaniasis, which dwells in tree holes, to make homestead trees its new habitat thus increasing the vector-man contact. Further, deforestation will drive away not only game animals (which may be good from the point of view of trypanosomiasis), but also predators such as insects, spiders and bird life which feed on a variety of diseases agents.

Crop cultivation on a large scale will create what Roundy calls a "field environment," which will serve to attract animals that are disease reservoirs, such as monkeys and baboons. These animals, which are carriers of the disease agent for yellow fever, attack cropped fields, but while doing so they may be fed upon by "domiciliated" mosquitoes which then pass the disease to humans.

We lack sufficient knowledge to be able to assess accurately the full impact of resettlement on the livelihood and well being of the indigenous population. However, the little we know suggests strongly that the programme will bring about increasing competition for resources between the host and guest populations, and this will become more serious as the

available resources are wasted through environmentally damaging and unsound land-use practices by the projects. At best, resettlement will create resentment among the marginalized people, at worst, it will threaten their economy and survival so much that it will become a cause for social conflict or even ethnic insurgency.

Resettlement: Problems and Prospects

The fundamental causes for the prevailing crisis in the resettlement programme are not just poor management but rather misunderstanding of the complexities involved, and the dearth of sound and workable policies to guide the large number of operations necessary in an undertaking of this sort. Further, from the very beginning resettlement was envisaged as a solution, almost a panacea, for a wide variety of social and economic problems, instead of being designed as a specific and limited measure to meet a specific objective.

The heterogeneity of resettlement objectives is the first problematic that needs to be examined closely. Such a task ought to be informed by the assumption that the country's resources are very limited and therefore priorities have to be carefully worked out to make rational use of the resources available. A multifaceted resettlement programme is, under the existing circumstances, unrealistic if not utopian from the point of view of rational resource use. As we saw earlier, rural resettlement in the post-revolution period has attempted to involve famine victims, land-less peasants, the urban unemployed, pastoralists and minority cultures in the periphery. The purposes have included population relocation, agricultural rationalization, creation of employment opportunities, promotion of rural collectivization, environmental control, and development of under-utilized lands. Each of these objectives needs its own finely tuned operational plans and careful preparatory work to make it a success. From the point of view of maximization of scare resources, some of the objectives should not have been part of the general resettlement programme to begin with. In brief, the programme has suffered because it over-extended itself: it attempted to do too many things, involved too many disparate social groups, and sought to achieve too many goals simultaneously. Let us look at the problem a little more closely.

1. To begin with, the re-distribution of population from one region to another will not really tackle the population problem in the sending areas but may create a population problem in the receiving areas. Some of the recipient *awrajas* in the southwest are themselves densely populated; the fringe zones have large land areas, sparse populations, but limited resources. If therefore population relocation is considered necessary the first question to be answered should be who should be relocated, where and why. Each group of potential settlers (poor peasants, the urban jobless, etc.) has specific needs, a specific work ethic and potential, and settlement programmes should target its efforts to meet these needs and potentials.

2. From the standpoint of programme success, measured in terms of the benefits and costs involved, some settlers are better than others. In some Asian experiences, successful rural settlers were found to be those with greater levels of formal education (Castillo 1979: 229), whereas in Latin America, educational levels were unimportant but rather success depended on whether settlers had been farm owners or farm managers before being involved in settlement schemes (World Bank 1981: 56). In our own case, it seems quite likely that under the right conditions peasants with poor or insufficient land, and peasants who have been dispossessed -in a word, peasants with independent farm management experience- would be more successful than other social groups. What this means is that resettlement should have been designed with a specific category of peasant cultivators in mind, and should not have included the urban or rural poor, pastoralists, etc.

3. The difficulties of settling the urban unemployed are by now too well known to need an extended treatment here. The work ethic and general social attitude of the urban poor makes them the least suited to farm labour, especially in the more remote regions of the country. The desertion rate in urban settled projects is far too high to ignore: in Harole where a majority of the settlers are from the urban areas, the average rate in 1984 was 70%; in Anger, another project with large urban settlers, the figure was 71%. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has been running a training and resettlement programme for the urban unemployed since 1978, and as of 1986/87 it had on its

record some 26,400 persons working in various rural projects (Council of Ministers 1988 C: 71), but the results have not been encouraging and the programme will probably not be continued. The costs incurred in all schemes involving urban settlers, particularly given the high rate of turn-over, are out of proportion to what little benefit has been gained, and it is incumbent on policy planners to reconsider the programme, and to devise alternative measures for tackling urban unemployment.

The problem of urban unemployment must be solved within the urban areas themselves, and, in this regard, policy planners should shift their attention from resettlement and focus it instead on schemes to create job opportunities in other sectors of the economy. Here, in the short run, an important source of new employment is the informal sector of the urban economy which ought to be encouraged; other sources are small-scale enterprises, cottage industries, and large scale public works.

4. Pastoralism in Ethiopia suffers not only from the vagaries of nature but from the ignorance and misunderstanding of officialdom which has always considered it as suitable only for a lower order of civilization. Ethiopian officialdom is merely reflecting the general prejudices of the highland peasantry against pastoral people, but this peasant view would have been harmless in itself if it was not for the policy implications that flow from it. We believe that in the present circumstances, settling pastoralists is not a high priority, and the needs of the pastoral system are best tackled by measures which lie outside the sphere of resettlement. It has been over twenty years since the first settlements for pastoralists were established in the Awash Valley and today most of these projects are still dependent on state handouts (ONCCP 1987).

Without going into the subject in great detail, we may note that pastoralism is a resilient and adaptive socio-economic system which has survived for several thousand years. Under difficult conditions, pastoralists have been known to adopt new ways to exploit the available resources and to take advantage of the prevailing conditions (Anderson 1988). Pastoralists may thus temporarily change their livelihood as an

adaptive measure, but they are most content to pursue economic activities that they are most familiar with, viz., raising livestock. This involves a complicated strategy of resource use, and a high level of environmental know-how. Many of the pastoralists in Ethiopia's periphery are not pure pastoralists, and their circle of movement is limited by other systems and other peoples, nevertheless their chief asset is livestock and their chief concern is its reproduction.

That pastoralism is highly efficient judged both by its own rules as well as in comparison to modern stock breeding enterprises has been demonstrated by a number of specialists on the subject. Noel Cossins, one of the most authoritative students of Ethiopian pastoralism, has shown that the Borana pastoral system compares very favourably with modern capitalist ranching schemes in Kenya, and was found to be more efficient than Australian ranching enterprises in similar environments in that country (Cossins 1985). The view of a number of specialists on pastoralism is that the attempt to sedentarize a nomadic population may be harmful both to the people and their environment (Hogg 1987; Horowitz and Little 1987).

5. Resettlement is a traumatic experience even under the best of conditions, and the human and social dimensions of it, which some specialists consider paramount (Scudder and Colson 1982) has not been give sufficient weight in the experiences of the post-revolution period. Because of the manner in which resettlement was carried out in the post-famine period, settlers were separated from their families, their kinfolk and cultural groupings. A community becomes homogenous and therefore more secure if it retains its traditional leaders and customary relationships, but the mass relocation that occurred in this period was a chaotic affair and the delicate links of friendship and trust among groups of peasants could not be maintained. One of the most persistent problems encountered in the projects by investigating teams has been insecurity and uncertainty among settlers, an indication of the seriousness of the dislocations suffered by them.

6. Another reason why resettlement has performed poorly has to do with

the over-ambitious goals set by policy planners. The government's estimation that settlement projects, irrespective of their location and resource endowments, should be self-supporting in 2 to 3 years was highly unrealistic. A more plausible target for "self-reliance" would have been 8 to 10 years for many projects. The following scenario may be worth considering for new settlements that may be planned in the future:

- Phase I, the first 2 to 3 years: a period of adjustment.
- Phase II, the next 3 to 5 years: a period of consolidation. This is the transition stage that will indicate what chances of success the project has.
- *Phase III, the next 5 to 8 years: sustainable progress.

Settlers will definitely need assistance in Phase I, may need assistance but at a reduced level in Phase II, and ought to be fully self-supporting in Phase III.

7. If settlement programmes are to be successful all impediments that inhibit settlers from employing their energies and ingenuity to the full must be removed. In this sense, small, individually operated schemes are preferable to large ones. It has been emphasized in a number of official reports that the co-operative arrangement in settlements has been a serious handicap and a source of low morale among settlers. A number of these reports have strongly urged that the co-operative policy should be immediately withdrawn and private endeavour encouraged instead (Western Zonal MoA 1988: 15; Council of Ministers 1988a: 167). If this policy is not changed, a large number of projects will continue to suffer indefinitely.

8. The relationship between settlers and the indigenous population has to be resolved so as to benefit both parties. The issue is not an easy one, as the resettlement programme did not take into account the interests of the local inhabitants when it was originally planned. The choice facing the projects will be total integration with surrounding systems, total separation, or some sort of balance between the two.

> Whatever choices are made should not lead to serious competition for resources between the two populations, nor allow the settlers to stand out as a privileged group in comparison. The local population must be made to feel that it is not simply forgotten and that it too is participating in the development process.

Policy Issues

From what has been said so far, a number of basic questions will have to be carefully resolved before a new policy of resettlement is drawn up. The first question to be considered is, do we really need resettlement? Related to this question are several others: is the resettlement programme now in operation the only alternative available to policy planners? what exactly has the programme achieved since it was launched more than a decade ago? We believe it is worth the effort to examine alternative development policies, including the promotion of intensive agriculture and environmental protection in the famine prone areas in place of large-scale resettlement. The argument that the development of agriculture in the northeast and northwest is impossible and therefore the excess rural population has to be relocated elsewhere should be reconsidered carefully. If after considering all the available options policy planners do decide that resettlement is a viable programme, then a thorough and accurate inventory of the resource potential of the country should be conducted; this inventory should employ the best scientific method the country is capable of obtaining. One cannot continue to operate large-scale resettlement programmes merely on the *assumption* that there are large, untapped resources.

It is our opinion that resettlement must be designed only for a certain category of rural cultivators. As we have argued above, the employment and development needs of other population groups require different approaches and different programmes. However, no settlement scheme will be successful unless the people involved willingly participate in it. The voluntary participation of the peasantry is therefore of paramount importance, and it is the task of implementing agencies to convince prospective candidates of the benefits of resettlement. *Indeed, settler candidates should be directly involved in the planning and preparation of settlement schemes*. This should entail sending peasants selected by the

would-be settlers to visit prospective sites to evaluate their suitability. Moreover, before any new schemes are planned or new settlers are involved, a serious effort should be made to solve the problems facing existing programmes and to consolidate their operations. This is not an easy task and may take several years.

The following recommendations are proposed with the preceding discussion in mind. The recommendations are not meant to be a blueprint for new programmes but a point of departure for discussion and further investigation.

Recommendations

- Low cost individually operated settlement schemes are preferable to large, capital intensive ones. If large projects have to be set up, one should cultivate crops that have export value.

- Streamline settlement models by phasing out large conventional settlements.

- Promote settler motivation, this will reduce settler turnover. Settler motivation is enhanced if there is freedom of movement within and out of the schemes, and if individual initiative is justly rewarded.

- RRC should be relieved of its settlement responsibilities and instead a new, independent settlement agency should be established. This agency should work closely with the relevant ministries and organizations.

- The new agency should be staffed primarily with personnel specialized and/or with practical experience in planning and operating settlement schemes. Avoid bureaucrats and paper-pushers.

- The new agency should encourage the participation of non-government organizations and private charities, both domestic and foreign, in resettlement work.

- For marketing and related activities, encourage service co-operatives in settlement schemes.

Annexes

Annex 1 Settlements and Settler Origin (Pre-Emergency)

Name	Location	Year Est.	Hhds	Area (ha.)	Settler Origin
Assossa	Wolleg	1976	7 000	20 600	P
Dimtu 1,2	Wolleg	1976	770	?	P, N
Diddessa, Kone&Kersa	Wolleg	1976	240	600	P, N
Anger Gutin	Wolleg	1977	2 000	3 500	P
Kurmuk	Wolleg	1976	650	1 200	P
Awash Val., (all sites)	---	PR	5 660	15 210	N, U
Teddele- Harole	Shoa	1976	2 560	4 600	U, P
Jewha	N. Shoa	1976	900	1 300	P
Negesso	N. Shoa	1977	300	310	P
Amibara	Harrar	PR	1 000	700	N
Gewane	Harrar	1976	700	400	N
Gode	Harrar	PR	900	1 200	P, N
Shinile*	Harrar	1976	300	600	P, N
Halidebi	Harrar	1976	350	400	N
Harewa & M.Oda	Bale	1979/80	4 365	5 000	P
Boter	Kaffa	1978	180	100	P
Gojeb	Kaffa	1976	550	1 200	U, P
Tum	Kaffa	1978	100	150	N
Did.Limu	Kaffa	1976	325	800	U, P
Bilate	Sidamo	1976	200	400	P
Wanleme	Sidamo	976	180	480	P
Chemerie	Sidamo	1977	NA	250	NA.
Gelana- Kombolcha	Sidamo	1979	300	500	P
G. Dimtu	Sidamo	1980	460	500	P
DanaGogora	Sidamo	1976	274	300	P
DarMilo	GamoG	1977	700	100	U
Dana 1-2	GamoG	1978	800	1 300	P, U
Chano	GamoG	PR	156	100	P

Mettema	Gondar	1978	130	550	P
Humera	Gondar	1976	1 000	2 500	P, U
Gambella*	Illub	1978	400	800	N
Golgota	Arssi	1976	450	1 000	U, P, N

***Note*:** * = settlements closed by 1984.
N = Nomads; NA = Not available; P = Peasants; PR = Pre Revolution; U =Urban unemployed.
***Source*:** MoAS; FAO/UNDP 1983; Council of Ministers 1988a.

Annex 2 Settlers and Settlement Schemes (1984-86)

Rec. Areas	**Conventional**	**Integrated**	**Articulated**	**Total**
Wollega	158 837	84 615	9 830	253282
Illubabor	52 698	93 518	--	146216
Kaffa	----	81 034	--	81034
Gojjam	101 123	---	--	101123
Gondar	----	6 387	--	6387
Shoa	----	---	6 149	6149
Total	*312 658*	*265 554*	*15 979*	*594191*

Source: RRC 1988.

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