Ian Campbell

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Name: Ian
Surname: Campbell
Nationality: British
Gender: m
Profession: Expert: Historic Researcher
Camps of imprisonment:
St. George's Prison
Danane
Nocra
Akaki Radio Station
Debre Birhan Prison
Dejazmach Latibalu Residence
Nefassilk
Janaale/Janale/Genale*

Major topics and particularities of the interview (Summary):
The prison and internment camps in Eritrean, Somalia and Ethiopia during Italian occupation, focusing on the research Campbell carried out between 1997 and 2010, interviewing several then still living survivors. The follow up of the Attack on Graziani, the Debre Libanos Massacre, the logic of Italian atrocities, the economic logic of Italian concentration camps, the Prison camps in Addis Abeba, why memory and research on the topic are missing in Ethiopia, in Italy and internationally, the role of the African camps in the overall Italian universe of concentration camps.

Date, place and duration of the interview: April 19th 2010, Addis Abeba, 88’18”

Language used: English
Recording quality: (48 kHz., Stereo)
Name of the researcher and copyright holder: Roman Herzog
Facilitator: Richard Pankhurst

Fundamental elements of the meeting:
Relaxed Interview in the private home of Ian Campbell at Addis Abeba.

Ian Campbell Alberto Sbacchi wrote many individual papers on the Italian occupation in Ethiopia. And he was the first person to write at lengths with an Ethiopian perspective. Finally he wrapped up his papers in two books¹. One of the early papers is called Italy and the treatment of Ethiopian aristocracy 1937-40 written in 1977². And his work represents the best data you can find on the numbers of Ethiopians that went to different types of prisons. Who went to Asinara who went to other Italian prisons of the aristocracy, how many exiles there were in each year. I don’t think anyone else has done

anything more advanced. So I would regard his work as one of the basic sources for you, for he has done lot's and lot's of papers focusing on specific topics. And I like his work, because they are not some bulks, you know, they are very practical. He doesn’t deal so much with high level policy, he deals with what actually happened.

**Researcher** So he did also some research, some in-field-work?

**IC** He did extensive research mainly in the Italian archives. But he is controversial for the Italians, like Del Boca. Because they don’t like to see what he is coming up with. But he has done a lot of what I would call knocks and bolds, you know. This other paper I wanted to recommend to you is the only one I have ever seen written on Italian concentration camps, and he covers world wide, of course not just Ethiopia. He quotes Del Boca on Ethiopia and I have quoted from him in my book on Debre Libanos.

**R** But this book is to come out, or has it been published already?

**IC** No, the book on Debre Libanos it is now being considered by Addis Abeba University Press. So I have some chapters in here which represent… But you can have this, if you want. It’s a prepublication rough copy. I have a chapter … I have one or two chapters on Italian atrocities here. This is not to show that Italians are bad, it’s not to exaggerate anything. It is to explain how it could happen that such a massacre of monks and innocent civilians could possibly take place within the framework of the Italian military setup. It was not a fascist massacre like Addis Abeba, it was a military massacre. So I tried to show that in Libya and in other places in the past, such patterns have emerged in the Italian military even pre fascism. Because at first Libya was pre-fascist. It was a certain unfortunate pattern which had become a habit of reprisals and so on. Even within the disciplined military. So for that reason I have one or two chapters explaining what I called “dishonourable conduct”, which I try to explain. Here you have people such as Maletti and Graziani, who are very disciplined military men, and here you have these unbelievable things happening, How can this be? So I have a chapter. Then I have another chapter on Danane. Which I call “per scopi repressivi” (for repressive reasons), which is taken from Walston’s paper, explaining that there were these concentrations camps, how were they used, why were they used, as a background to introducing Danane, because most of my readers who are intended to be ordinary people, will not be familiar with any of this.

**R** Maybe we can directly go into this subject, from your point of view, the concentration camps inside the fascist project in Ethiopia don’t have a primary role in my impression, no principle role like the gas war or the extermination in these atrocities, what’s the role of the camps inside the “Ethiopian chapter! of Italian fascism?

**IC** I think the way I saw it, they were not used for punishment, not used for the purpose of punishment. They may have punished people, but they were not used for the purpose of punishment. They were not used for the purpose of killing. They were primarily used by Graziani as a convenient way of moving people out of circulation. That was number one. Secondly they were far away. In many cases he didn’t want those people to be in any sort of contact with the rest of Ethiopian society. So he wanted

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5 Major General Pietro Maletti has been combating from 1917 to 1934 in Libya. In January 1935 he was transferred to Italian Somaliland for the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. He fought throughout the campaign on the "southern front" under the overall command of General Rodolfo Graziani. In April 1937 he assumed the command of the 2nd Colonial Brigade, responsible for the massacre of Debre Libanos (Campbell, Ian, 2012, *The Massacre of Debre Libanos. Ethiopia 1937*, Addis Abeba: forthcoming).
them to be in Somalia, which is like being on the moon. But secondly once they were there, I think there is a strong commercial element to the running of certainly Danane, maybe not Nocra, I don’t know about Nocra. I think there was a large commercial element in Danane and one which is often overlooked. In fact I think there was a commercial element in a lot of what went on, stealing and looting and the whole question of the business interests of the Italian transport company. There was a lot of money making, actually behind the way the occupation was conducted. But I don’t think Graziani had that …, was the principle intention. But it developed. Danane became a place around which Italians who were well connected, could make money. But that was a secondary thing. I don’t think it was meant to kill people or even to punish them. In Graziani’s telegrams he doesn’t use vocabulary to suggest, that he is sending people to be punished he doesn’t even suggest that they are guilty of anything. In fact he suggests that they are not guilty of anything but it would be convenient to remove them. So I think that was (it), it was different from what we think of as German concentration camp.

R Yeah, maybe we can figure out a little bit this difference. I mean he wanted to make people disappear we can say, far away “on the moon” you said, from this point of view the deportation to Italy is the extreme and follows the same logic or was the deportation to Italy an extra chapter?

IC To be honest the deportation to Italy I have never really understood, what it was all about. And one of the things, for some years I tried to work that out and then I came across in the archives in Washington, there is a copy of Graziani’s telegram sheets on how he should dispose on Ras Immirù, who was officially the Viceroy of the Emperor, I mean technically the Viceroy of the Emperor. And Graziani has just had killed the three Kassa brothers after promising them safe conduct if they would surrender⁶. He has had them executed. And he captures Ras Immirù. And Richard Pankhurst asked me a couple of years ago, «Why, do you think, Graziani didn’t kill Ras Immirù?» And I said, «Well, maybe there were political reasons». But now when I saw this, it was Mussolini that refused to allow him to kill Ras Immirù.

R Why?

IC Mussolini said that he must send him to Italy in prison. And Graziani was extremely angry and he got a black marker and he underlined and put big exclamation marks, question marks, «What? Are you crazy?» I mean all this type of comment. He had every intention of executing Ras Immirù immediately. And he regarded imprisonment in Italy I think as a holiday camp. And he couldn’t understand why Mussolini is telling him to send Ras Immirù to Italy. Probably Mussolini maybe wanted to show the world, firstly, that he doesn’t kill people unnecessarily. And secondly the spectacle of aristocracy and the Viceroy in Italy alive would prove that the Italians have taken over 100 percent control and therefore will support Mussolini motion in Geneva to have Haile Selassie removed from his seat at the League of Nations. And that motion was put to the League of Nations at that time by Italians. So I thought then, ok the imprisonment of Aristocracy in Italy was something to do with international poli-

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⁶ During the early days of the Italian occupation of Ethiopia, Aberra Kassa was part of the armed Ethiopian resistance. Following the flight of Emperor Haile Selassie, the sons of Ras Kassa became the royal focus of the resistance. Late in July 1936, he took part in the ill-fated attack on Addis Ababa along with his brothers, Wondosson Kassa and Asfawossen Kassa. After the failure of that attack, he and Asfawossen Kassa fled together to avoid capture. On 21 December 1936, Aberra Kassa and Asfawossen Kassa surrendered. They had been assured by Ras Hailu Tekle Haymanot that they would not be harmed. Hailu Tekle Haymanot was speaking on behalf of the Italian Viceroy and Governor-General of Ethiopia, Rodolfo Graziani. Hailu Tekle Haymanot was the father-in-law of Asfawossen. Aberra Kassa was also given assurances by his own father-in-law, Seyum Mangasha. However, once in captivity, the bodyguards of the brothers were disarmed and they were executed as rebels in the market square in Fikke (Sbacchi, Alberto, 1997, Legacy of Bitterness: Ethiopia and Fascist Italy, 1935-1941, Trenton: Red Sea Press, p. 324; Sbacchi, Alberto, 1975, Italian colonialism in Ethiopia 1936-1940, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aberra_Kassa).
tics. It was nothing to do really with the Ethiopian situation. And ladies such as Yeweinshet’s mother, I don’t know, did you manage to meet her jet?

R Yes yesterday?

IC Oh you met her mother?

R Yes, her mother also but only ten minutes.

IC Ok, when she was more lucid, she was… she told me that there was a complete lack of comprehension by the prisoners, as to what was the motive of the Italians in imprisoning them. She had no explanation at least to me. So I now put that down for something to do with Mussolini and international politics. And Graziani never understood, I think, the international politics.

R Well we have this rivalry between Mussolini and Graziani or Badoglio and Graziani in many chapters of this fascist period.

IC Yes, and it is one of the things that has shaped my book, my analysis on the massacre of Debre Libanos and on the Yekatit 12 which is the day of the attempt on the Governor Generale. Because there was rivalry between Badoglio and Graziani in the first place. Then there was rivalry between the hard line fascists and what I call the liberals. I diagnose that there was, in Graziani’s administration there was a liberal group of people like Della Porta for example. Who did not agree with the massacre. Della Porta tried to have the massacre stopped on two occasions when Graziani was in hospital. And he failed, because the hardliners like Guido Cortese wanted to go ahead. And I even suspect that people like Della Porta and Pallavicino were more friendly with people such as Abraham Deboch than they should have been. Secondly they all had mistresses and some of those mistresses were arrested after the attempt on Graziani. And some were sentenced to be imprisoned in Italy. And these were girls that they had been sleeping with. So I have not fully explored this in my book, but it could be an interesting subject. If you read Graziani’s memoirs which he wrote actually while he was in prison many years later, he suspects that there was a sort of fifth’s column in his own administration. And he knew it at the time and he tried to get them expelled. And he got most of them expelled on the ground of sleeping with Ethiopian women, which was by then against the fascist rule. So my book touches on the possibility that there was some collusion between some of the people in his own office, and the people who threw the bombs. And in one case, Graziani in his memoirs he says, «I discover that Mr. Pallavicino», who was the head of the political office, which means, the spy-, the informers-office, «certainly moved inside the Palace just before the bombs would have been thrown. And when the bombs were thrown, the head of the political office wasn’t there. And he was in the office with some Ethiopians». And all this is in the memoirs and has never been published outside of the memoirs. And he says «To this day I cannot understand.» Pallavicino was married to an English woman. And he was a son of an English woman. And he spent his time at the British embassy at Addis Ababa. And he hints that there was a strong unit of people hwo were disaffected but who liked Badoglio. You know, Badoglio went for to rule Ethiopia like the British or like the ancient Romans together with the local chiefs. And Lessona has thrown out that proposal and brought in Graziani and as you know, Badoglio left. And Graziani's job was «No power to the Rases». That was the thing. Instead of working with

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them, they ended up being imprisoned. So I think the people that came with Badoglio, they didn’t come with Graziani, they came with Badoglio, they were then left by Badoglio, but they clearly were the ones who wrote Badoglio’s proposals. They were inherited by Graziani. So Graziani takes over and he finds all of Badoglio’s men, who, I think, were not happy to see Graziani. Because they wanted Ethiopian girlfriends and they had money they had access to power. They were going to have a good time. And Badoglio was going to have a good time, he was avaricious, he liked money and material possessions. And I think they had planned everything between themselves very nicely, that they would rule Ethiopia like the British maybe would rule Kenya, but with a closer contact with the Ethiopians. And then along comes the new fascist policy, which is absolutely no involvement of the locals and plus it’s illegal to sleep with Ethiopian girls.

R But this was not only the idea of Graziani, this was also the idea of Mussolini or not, this change, or was it only depending on Graziani?

IC No, it wasn’t depending on Graziani at all. I think the architect of Fascism at that time was mainly Lessona. I think it came entirely from Rome but it was just like chance that Graziani then was the hardliner who was moved in. Whereas Badoglio… anyway originally he was not a fascist. He was more of a pragmatist and a military man, old school. Graziani was more disciplined. I don’t think that Graziani… Well I don’t know. People say he had a local girlfriend. I’ve never seen any evidence of that. His wife was here for some of the time, his daughter was married here. It was just chance that Graziani was there. I think there was a very rapid development. After Badoglio came in to fight the war, from what I have seen fascist policy developed very rapidly. When the soldiers were leaving Italy to come to Ethiopia they were given like pornographic pictures to attract them to come out here, because of the girls. By that time the Viceroy-Ship was announced, it had changed completely. So I don’t think Badoglio realized that things had moved so rapidly. So it was just chance that it was Graziani who was brought in. And Abraham Deboch who was, if you like, one of the leaders of the gang who attacked the government, was the interpreter of Mr. Pallavicino, this head of the political office. So my theory is, Abraham Deboch and others gave them a lot of local information, that they wrote these proposals of Badoglio to run Ethiopia with the local set up, through the local chiefs. But meanwhile things had changed in Rome. So that when the new instruction came out at the time when Graziani was appointed, none of that was possible. So Graziani had to follow the new line.

R But coming back to the camp issue, do you think this camp issue was in accordance with Graziani’s thinking or…

IC I think it was there form the beginning. Because they set up Danane I think even before. They set up the use of gas and the use of concentration camps, I’m sure, was set up even before the invasion. And I think he based it all… Even Badoglio was in Libya of course as well. I think they based all this on their Libya experience.

R So in which way did the Libya experience serve as a model or not, what is the difference also to the Libyan example? I mean in Libya many, many people have been imprisoned, in Ethiopia not so much, for example.

IC [PAUSE] I think, I’m not sure, the resistance in Libya was more well organized, than it was in Ethiopia. I mean it is not politically correct to say so, but actually most Ethiopians were collaborators. The whole of Gojjam invited in the Italians, because of a lot of dissent between Haile Selassie and the other local kings and Rases and so on. So it was only after the attack on Graziani that any form of resistance started. And even then it was actually limited to people who had been forced to flee Addis Abeba. If you talk to the patriots, some of the few patriots I’ve talked to, actually they said, «We were
not heroes. We only became patriots, because we were forced to by Graziani». Because, if they had stayed in Addis they would have been killed. So all the men had to leave Addis Abeba. And they became the patriot force. Had Graziani not conducted the massacre of Addis Abeba, personally I think, the resistance would have probably died out. There would have been no need for large scale imprisonment. The paradox is that Graziani generated the opposition. Otherwise I think, it was much less, than it was in Libya.

R But imprisonment begins after the attack on Graziani. Because before there have already been the camps, but there were not as many people sent to the camps, right?

IC Much viewer, much viewer. The large scale movement to prisons and camps, and the proposal to build a concentration camp at Akaki, which is on the outskirts of Addis Abeba, all came about after Yekatit 12, the date of the attack. There was not much organized resistance in this country, until then. What there was, there was very irritating resistance, which was widespread, which made it difficult for the Italians to operate. But the numbers of people involved were very few. And like the attack in 1936, to try to retake Addis Abeba, it was expected to get the support of the inhabitants of the city. It absolutely did not. No-one supported it. People wanted peace and quiet. It died out.

R What is this concentration camp Akaki, I never heard about it?

IC It is still in use, it’s being used now for the people who have been trialed for the Mengistu atrocities. It is a prison.

R And it was built by the Italians?

IC Yes.

R And served as concentration camp?

IC Yes, it’s referred to as a concentration camp in Graziani’s telegram. He uses it as a transit sometimes, for people going to Danane. His method usually was not sending people straight to Danane. In some cases yes, but in many cases, they would go to a prison, like at Debre Birhan, it was a big prison there, then they would be send to Akaki and then from Akaki they would be send to Danane.

R Or Nocra.

IC Finally enough Nocra we... I haven’t found out much about Nocra. I know that it was very strange, that some of the people released from Italy were then sent to either Nocra or Danane. Which is much worse. But the people in Italy seam to think it was better, because it was closer to Ethiopia. And that was a big shock to some of the people who came out of Italy.

RF So when we open up a little bit the universe, how many concentration camps do we have in this area? And which are them?

IC The concentration camps I can think of at the moment, are only three, because they are the ones I have come across, Nocra, Danane and Akaki. There may have been others, that I haven’t come across. But those are mainly the ones I hear about. When Italians came, there were very few prisons in Ethiopia. As you probably know, the tradition of imprisonment was not to hold people in a public prison. People were imprisoned in a prison basement of the houses of the aristocracy. And that aristocrat was given a responsibility of guarding the prisoners. So if you go to these old houses in Addis

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10 Between 28th and 30th July 1936 took place the ill-fated attempt to re-conquer Addis Ababa by the Ethiopian resistance, lead by the commanders of the Scioa resistance, three of them the Kassa Brothers Wondosson, Aberra and Asfawossen Kassa. After the failure of that attack, Asfawossen and Aberra Kassa fled together to avoid capture (Del Boca, Angelo, 1986, Gli italiani in Africa orientale. Vol. 3 La caduta dell’Impero, Bari: Laterza, p 20-26).
Abeba you generally find underneath the ground floor there is a prison. So there could be a hundred prisoners in Addis Abeba, but no prison. They are all distributed in the different houses. Now Haile Selassie, then being modern, he built one prison, which the Italians called St. George Prison. This was a very small prison, built by the Emperor, because it was recognized, that we cannot always continue the old system. And it was taken over as the main political prison, that is prison for political prisoners by the Italians. And it still exists, but it is now a primary school. It is called Ethiopia Tikdem, Ethiopia First Primary School. And that prison became a very, very notorious sort of concentration camp after the attack on Graziani. And I met people who lived near the prison who told me how it operated. And it is also in the war crimes evidence\textsuperscript{11}, because a certain Italian doctor his name is Iannuzzi, he was put in charge of it and he personally gave evidence for the War Crimes Trials\textsuperscript{12}, but excusing, he stayed on in Ethiopia.

R \textit{Which evidence, what did they do?}

IC He was trying to say, «Well, I did my best». The prison was in incredibly overstretched. They had up to 6,000 people I think, am I wrong... Anyway, something far in excess of the capacity. And he tried to say, that «I tried to introduce good practices, I did my best, I tried to make sure people got exercise». They were allowed out twenty minutes each day. And the people who lived there could see them and they were screaming and shouting and in pain and so on, in that twenty minutes, down by the river. And the school which is there now, they still find human bones sometimes down by the river, even now, because the river area is included in the school area.

R \textit{So this would be a fourth concentration camp we could say?}

IC You could call it actually a concentration camp, because it concentrated people for an indefinite period in very bad conditions.

R \textit{Well I talked to Shiferaw Bekele this morning he told me about two temporary concentration camps in Shano and in Ambo.}

IC I'm not familiar with that.

R \textit{He said these camps served as execution camps mainly, where people got detained temporarily and were then executed.}

IC I've not come across those. Probably if I stretch my research beyond Addis Abeba, and I might will. If Shiferaw said, than there is no doubt that it is true. Absolutely no doubt, he is 100 % reliable.

R \textit{But we have also some informal camps around Addis, there was writing about this. Did you come across? Dominioni wrote about this in his last book\textsuperscript{13}.}

IC Did he? I'm not familiar with the book. [...]

R \textit{There he says that “…after becoming prisoners, the Ethiopians passed several months in various concentration camps and prisons around Addis Abeba.” [...]}

IC From my limited knowledge the main killing camp if that is the correct word, after the attack on Graziani, was St. George's. And I base this on the fact that several people testified that people died


\textsuperscript{12} See the testimony of Vittorio Iannuzzi http://www.campifascisti.it/scheda_testimonianza_full.php?id_tst=18

\textsuperscript{13} Dominioni, Matteo, 2008, Lo sfascio dell'impero. Gli italiani in Etiopia 1936-1941, Bari: Laterza
there. And also, more specifically, the … one of the collaborators in the plot, who drove the two Eritreans to Debre Libanos and then came back, was arrested and he was put in St. George’s Prison. And he was tortured very, very badly. He was tortured to death, almost. And it is thought, that finally he was killed on Graziani’s instructions, probably because he knew too much, in such a way that it didn’t show how he was executed. So here we have a man who was tortured very badly, to get information, he was then left for several weeks still alive, and then he was conveniently killed on a scheduled day along with various other people. And I know this, because the body of this man was removed and given to his sister. Now his sister gave a lot of gold, as a bribe to the same doctor, cause he liked gold. The sister gave a lot of gold, so she was given the body against the regulation. And they took the body and she saw, the hair had been pulled out, the fingernails had been pulled out, and he had been whipped and so on. But she said the cause of death was that he was poisoned. That’s strange but that’s what she said. That body was then released to her and it was taken secretly to Gulele Cemetery. And it was buried. And the nephew of the victim, that is the brother’s son, is now the Archbishop of the catholic church, The, His Holiness the Archbishop of the Catholic Church in Ethiopia, he had the body reburied with a proper account of the story. And I’ve interviewed him several times. So I know that is completely reliable. So from the details they gave me, it was clear that St Giorgio was maybe “The” main prison for the killing of people after the attack on Graziani.

**R Do we have numbers?**

**IC** All the numbers I’ve come across, from only two sources, one is Alberto Sbacchi, and the other is the War Crimes Testimony, those are to my knowledge the only sources of numbers. During the executions immediately after the attack on Graziani, there were five, I was told of five execution places. But these were not permanent prison camps. They were I think temporarily. Like one was near St. George’s Brewery, which is on the Giuma road. One was near Ras Desta’s house, which is I think on the Ambo road. These were temporary killing areas. I don’t think they were permanent. But one thing, that would be interesting to do, would be to identify the houses which were turned into prisons. So even slightly before Yekatit 12 certain specific houses of the aristocracy were commandeered and turned into prisons. One of such houses was the house of Latibalu Gebru, which is in Siddist Kilo. It is now a tech badge. That house was an Italian prison. Another one was the Armenian house opposite the Semien Hotel, that was an Italian prison. Because there weren’t any prisons. So several of these houses became prisons for the duration of the occupation. One or two of them are mentioned in the War Crimes Testimony including Latibalu’s House, someone who is imprisoned there, is giving testimony 14. So that is another transit point or makeshift type of prison. Other than that? I don’t think I know of any other specific prisons. When I was doing my book on the plot, I started compiling a section on prisons. And then I left it out of the book I think, because it was incomplete. But I could, if you can remind me by email, I could send you that chapter. Let me just see, if I included it. No, I removed it. I tried to make a list of all the prisons that I came across references to in various places. […]

**R But when we talk again about numbers, how many people were imprisoned?**

**IC** I can’t remember. I think it’s Danane which is 6.500

**R Then we have 5.000- 6.000 in Nocra.**

**IC** Was Nocra that big?

14 See testimony of Michael Tessema [http://www.campifascisti.it/scheda_testimonianza_full.php?id_tst=15].

15 The maximum presence documented at Nocra has been 1.800 internees in 1940 (see Testimony of Gabrie Leul Jacob [http://www.campifascisti.it/scheda_testimonianza.php?id_campo=48&id_tst=17]). No comprehensive numbers about internees at the camp are available.
R At least the figures say, and than we have these new other camps in Addis, you mentioned, in these hundreds or thousands have been imprisoned, what is your impression?

IC I think Akaki could not have held more than maybe 500 or 1.000. In that case, if those figures are correct, maybe the maximum might be 15.000.

R So it’s a minor number.

IC Yes, it’s not hundreds of thousands.

R That’s what I refereed to when I said “no dominant role”, because in Libya we had at least 100.000 people imprisoned16.

IC The whole population of Cyrenaica.

R Why this difference?

IC The difference I think comes down to the fact that the resistance was limited. And it’s only after the attack on Graziani that you see the numbers reaching thousands. Probably it was only hundreds up until that point. Of course the popular perception now is that the whole of Ethiopia was in resistance, but of course that is not true. It was quite limited. I think the atrocities of the Italians were less in imprisonment and more in 1) the use of gas, and because of the way it was used particularly and 2) in the atrocities which were incredibly barbaric, medieval in fact, which was difficult to reconcile, even with the principles of fascism. The gas I think because it was used mainly against civilians, to blackmail the patriots into stopping their resistance. So it turned civilians into terrorist, the former terrorism, whereas in the beginning it was probably used, like at Ashanghi, it was used purely in the troops. But after the occupation had started, it was when they put the spraying equipment on the planes. Before it was just bombs, it was a form of warfare. But once they put the spraying equipment, it was intentionally used mainly on civilians. Because the patriots are very sensitive about the civilians who were their families, for them to be injured.

R Why is there so little information about the camps?

IC [PAUSE] Probably the answer is the same as to the question why is there so little information about the occupation. In the case of the camps…In the case of the atrocities, like the massacre of Addis Abeba, it is clear. All the witnesses are dead. Because the witnesses were the victims, there was nobody else, other than the Italians themselves. So any photographic evidence and so on has come mainly from Italians. In the case of the camps, people did come back. Like the one I interviewed most extensively, who was one of the children send to Danane, who was therefore a bid younger than many other informants at that time, from what he told me, probably no-one had ever asked him. It had become like a taboo subject. When I interviewed people on the massacre Engecha near Debre Libanos, not one of them had ever been asked by the Ethiopian government or any interested party what happened. Not one! They all told me this, «You are the first person, to ever ask me this». So it seams that at the time, when they came back, the Italians were still in charge and the Ethiopians were not in charge. The Duke of Aosta was in charge. So I could understand that it was a taboo subject. Once Haile Selassie came back he promoted and he supported the people who had not really engaged in resistance. Because people engaged in resistance tend to be radical, let’s say left wing in the modern sense. Haile Selassie was not left wing. He was what we would call right wing. So you had a funny

16 Gustavo Ottolenghi calculates that 100.000 of 143.000 people living in the Libyan Cirenaica have been deported and interned in concentration camps (Ottolenghi, Gustavo, 1997, Gli Italiani e il colonialismo. I campi di detenzione italiani in Africa, Milano: Sugarco, p. 62-63).
situation, where he was more comfortable with people who had collaborated, and did not want to say bad things also about the Italians. Maybe Haile Selassie also wanted peace. He wanted a good relationship with Italy. Italy had joined the British by then. Don’t forget it was the British who blocked the war crimes. So maybe by 1941 it was not politically expedient to discuss what had happened. And I don’t think Haile Selassie ever encouraged any commission of inquiry, nothing like that. I couldn’t find anything, You know I collect books published during and after Italian occupation here. I could never find anything in the way of a government report, or workshop, meeting, inquiry, anything. So I think that Ethiopians were on political pressure not to discuss what had happened.

R But I mean civil society itself could have discussed it …

IC But civil society didn’t exist during the Emperors time, there absolutely was no civil society. He was a benign dictator, he wasn’t a bad man. But there was no, absolutely no civil society. And don’t forget, the Emperor was the head of the church. So the church did not constitute civil society.

R Ok, even if it was like that, but intellectuals, was there no intellectual discussion, of artists?

IC Yes, there was, there was this intellectual group. Who thought that, after the Italian occupation, that the emperor would be willing to bring in a sort of republican type of constitution. But then he regarded it as a plot, and the plot was revealed and they were hanged. So the remaining intellectuals, who escaped execution after the Emperor returned, went into seclusion they retired from active life.

R So as you mentioned before, is there no cultural product, which regards the occupation and the camps, you mentioned this one film, is it the only one?

IC Yeah, the film isn’t a bout the camps, the film is about the war. [pause] I think, there is nothing.

R No writers, no novel, no…?

IC No, because one of the other people I interviewed, as I told you before, was Tekle-Tsadik Mekuria. He was the most politic writer among Ethiopians, about Ethiopian culture, Ethiopian history. Plus he was a government minister, plus he was multilingual. He would have known, had there, and he would have promoted such a thing. But even though he himself was minister of culture he clearly made it clear to me that there was nothing from what he told me. And everything I asked him was like painful to extract. Not that he refused t talk, but it was something that he never talked about, ever, his time in Danane. This was something very unusual to ask him.

R But it is also a cultural effect, does remembrance of our European kind, let’s say, not play such a role in the Ethiopian society, is that also a reason?

IC No, I think Ethiopian culture is to remember these things for centuries. Ethiopians still remember Aḥmad Grāḥ and things one would like to forget maybe. They remember everything. I don’t think it’s culture. I personally think it is the political atmosphere that prevailed in the Haile Selassie government.

R And under Mengistu there was no change?

IC Under Mengistu there was no change. Mengistu took out of history what was convenient. He didn’t like Emperors, of course, he was communist police state. But he selected Emperor Theodoros as a

17 The historian Tekle-Tsadik Mekuria has been Ethiopian Cultural Minister from 1974 to 1975. He passed away in July 2000 (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/849680.stm).
18 Aḥmad Grāḥ, also called Aḥmad the Left-handed, real name Aḥmad Ibn Ibrāḥīm al-Ghāzī (born c. 1506—died 1543) has been the leader of a Muslim movement that all but subjugated Ethiopia. At the height of his conquest, he held more than three-quarters of the kingdom, and, according to the chronicles, the majority of men in these conquered areas had converted to Islam (http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/10110/Ahmad-Gran).
national hero. Because Theodoros had a radical approach, he wanted to abolish the landholdings of the church. He wanted to unite Ethiopia. So the Derg took Theodoros and made him a national sort of role model, for young members of the party. Maybe if he had said anything bad against the Italians, that’s like he was favouring Haile Selassie, and he had to admit that Haile Selassie was the Emperor, and that Haile Selassie suffered for this country, which he wouldn’t want to do. So I think for the Mengistu government, from what I can remember, they completely removed from memory the entire Haile Selassie period, the 1920s and 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, 1960s.

R Even the war?

IC Everything! Any... People were afraid even to have a picture or a newspaper article, or a gramophone record, anything of that period because when people were taken away, these objects would be removed from their houses as evidence that they were bourgeois or that they were not supporting the party. So a lot of people made stuff available like for the museum, and even the Derg when they stole a lot of material from the victims houses. A librarian at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies had an arrangement with the Soldiers to carry all those things. So we know that anything, a photo album, a newspaper, anything of anything to do with the time of the Emperor, from 1920s up to 1960s was unthinkable. Menelik was somehow recognized for a time, so they left the statue there. But even then Menelik was discredited, when the government changed now. Because he conquered the borders, and was therefore deemed to be a colonial. He was eventually discredited. But during the Derg the Menelik statue stood. But anything to do with 1920 onwards was taboo.

R And the actual government?

IC This government got into power on a ticket of promoting the regions. So the first thing they did was to denounce the flag of Ethiopia and the national anthem, and all the symbols to do with a united Ethiopia were deemed to be, not bourgeois, but imperial, centralistic, centrist. So they completely demolished to the centralist symbols, to promote regionalism, until this attempted invasion of Tigray by Eritrea, which was designed to overthrow this government, because this government had withdrawn all the economic concessions, that had (been) agreed earlier with Eritrea. At that point then they revived the motherland concept, because they wanted all the young men to join the military to fight the Eritrean war. That was a temporary thing. The centrist thing has now more or less been dropped. So the answer is, no, this government appeared have no interest in studying anything of recent history. When this government came in, it was an Ethio-Eritrean government and all the high officials were Eritreans. So they didn’t want to promote the idea that Eritrea was not a country of long standing. So if you look at the Italians period, you will find that Eritrea was created for the Italians by Menelik, and that was not a popular thing. So there was no desire to look at any recent Ethiopian history.

R When we come back for a moment to the camps, which role do these Ethiopian camps play inside the overall fascist projects of camps, there have been camps in Italy, in Yugoslavia in Greece. Was it also a kind of model for the camps, for example in Albania, or for the treatment of people in Albania or Greece?


20 Derg, also Dergue was the name of the military junta that came to power in Ethiopia following the ousting of Haile Selassie and ruled the country from 1974 to 1991. Derg, which means "committee" or "council", is the short name of the Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces, Police, and Territorial Army (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Derg, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethiopian_history).
I got an impression, I haven’t studied the European camps, that the camps in Europe were more on the line with German concentration camps, for severe repress of the prisoners, and as a form of ruthless punishment as much as just getting people out of the public eye. So I think there may have been a difference between the concentration camps for Ethiopians and the concentration camps in Eastern Europe. Nonetheless I did mention you before that I felt the massacre of Debre Libanos was like exactly similar to some of the massacres in Albania. So there were some continuity between the two. But in the use of camps, I think it is different. I think Graziani planned to have the camps there but didn’t need them in the end, until the attack in Siddist Kilo. In fact, you know, if you read like Italian sources it seems that Mussolini’s hope was that he could take Ethiopia without any violence even. At least to begin with, his thinking was, right up to the last minute, he could do a deal I think he was less warlike actually, than we sometimes assume. It would have been very convenient to him to have all the credit without any problem. He personally necessarily intended this to be a bloody long drawn out conflict. And when he announced in Piazza Venezia that Ethiopia is now ours, it was like Iraq, when he said «mission accomplished». I think he genuinely fooled himself into believing that it was all over. But actually it was the beginning. And the same as Iraq again, I don’t think he had a clear blueprint, for how he was going to govern Ethiopia. Just like Bush, he thought it would be a simple thing. So in both cases they simply completely miscalculated. And a lot of what they did was not actually necessarily planned. It was something dreamed up on the spur of the moment.

But for example if we look again at Danane, you said, that they were not so severe in Danane, but we have a mortality which is very, very high, even in comparison to other concentration camps or German concentration camps. I mean Danane was mainly a camp which served for annihilation, or how can we say?

Well I don’t think so, because according to what we read in the testimony of the Ethiopia doctor, who became a judge, anyway, he gave testimony21, the deaths were almost all from disease. The deaths from maltreatment and punishment were very small percentage. That suggests that people were not being killed, like they were in German concentration camps, but that the camp, was containing maybe ten times the number of people that it should have done, and there was a severe shortage of drinking water. So people were drinking sea water. And they were dying from it. So talking to the people I interviewed, which are very few, they actually, to be honest, they did not talk about excessive ill treatment. They talked about bad conditions. And I got the impression that the management of the camp were completely out of their depth. They were running a camp designed for maybe 400 people, maybe there were 6.000 people there. They did not necessarily intend that those people should die. And they were embarrassed by the deaths and always tried to deny, that so many people died. As I say, according to Ethiopian testimony, they did not die from maltreatment. They may have died from neglect, but not necessarily planned neglect. I’m not excusing the Italian management. But from what I see, it was mainly the horrible conditions. And they were dying from epidemics of diseases and for drinking salt water, as they couldn’t get fresh food, they couldn’t get fresh water.

And they had to work you said, the economic rationality was….

They had to work in the banana plantations. Well the first one I interviewed did not have to work, because he was a child. He worked but not commercially. He had to work for the women’s half of the camp, cleaning sweeping, that type of thing, as they separated the men and the women. And he lived in a tent. You know, when it started, the buildings were permanent, permanent buildings. But there were only few. So when more and more people came, and they exceeded the capacity, they were

21 See testimony of Michael Tessema [http://www.campifascisti.it/scheda_testimonianza_full.php?id_tst=15].
living in temporary tents. So this fellow was in a tent. And he worked in the camp throughout his period. But Tekle-Tsadik Mekuria was older. So he worked on the banana plantations, yeah, that was purely commercial. They were sent to work and they were brought back.

R You said neglecting but work of this kind there is also a kind of rationality behind. It was just treating these people in this way...

IC Like animals, yes. It’s true. But that's different from having an extermination camp. I mean not all German camps were extermination camps. People assume they were but actually they weren’t. Some were labour camps, and they were different, some were for extermination, yes. There was a punishment block at Danane. But I never heard of an extermination block, no-one mentioned that to me.

R But this punishment block how was it?

IC I don’t know. I think people were kept in solitary confinement there. But you know, when they talk about being there, they don’t talk about of a concentration camp, they say «I was in prison. First I was in prison in Debre Birhan, then I was in prison in Akaki, then I was in prison in Danane», and so on and so on. Now Nocra, I don’t know. Nocra would have a much stronger case for saying that the condition automatically meant death or torture. No-one could possibly suggest a prison camp in the Dahlac Islands was not a death camp, because the temperature is so high. One could think maybe in Somalia, had they maintained the intended number of a few hundred, that that was intended to be just a genuine prison camp, that got out of control. I mean I could be wrong, it is just my thinking. The sense I have. Nocra must have been a very different situation. I mean Nocra was like a Devil’s Island, you know, it was really like a death camp. And I wonder why no-one has ever… I couldn’t find anything about Nocra. And neither could Richard Pankhurst. Nothing.

R Coming back to this, what is the material basis? You mentioned several interviews, how many interviews do you have of people who have been imprisoned in these camps?

IC You know, when I started this I didn’t pay enough attention to people who said, «I was in Danane», because it was very remote from my subject to begin with. I probably talked to half a dozen people who have been in Danane. Yeah, probably over the years I probably talked about six people maybe who were in Danane. But I didn’t pay enough attention to it at that time. The only two, there are two people, the ones I mentioned, on whom I have specific interview notes, and I did write down something about Danane, and one is Tebebe Kassa and one is Tekle-Tsadik Mekuria. I would have to go through my earlier notes and see who else might have been in Danane. But those are the two that I realized afterwards, this is an important subject. You see, when I started researching this, I assumed that this was already documented, and that I was ignorant. So I didn’t pay so much attention. I didn’t realize, that this was unique information that I was getting. I was new to the subject, I’m not a historian. Had I realized at that time that no-one has documented any of this, I would have paid much more attention. Even when I interviewed Tekle-Tsadik Mekuria I didn’t really realize that this is a unique interview, which I’m now conducting. I thought, I’m just following the footsteps of many other people. And then when people started telling me, «You are the first person who has asked me», it took me a long time to realize, that this subject is not already documented. And then I thought afterwards «Oh my god, I should have asked him so much more». And he would have known people probably who have been in Nocra. Tekle-Tsadik Mekuria was without a doubt the best informed Ethiopian on such a subject. Simply because he is so well connected. And he is a professional writer, a government minister, a man of culture, a man of sophistication. And I didn’t ask him any more. After he died I realized really that looses a big vacuum. So I’m sorry about that.

R Well, you did your part, but how do you explain this overall silence of researchers?
IC I can understand the Ethiopian researchers being silent or non existent, because of the politics of the day. You know in Ethiopia you don’t talk. You know it is not like America where we have Blablabla all the time. Here people would always tend to be silent, rather than speak. In America you speak rather than be silent. Here they will always tend to defer to silence. Because of the politics of the Emperor and then the politics of Mengistu you don’t speak. Whatever you say might be construed badly by somebody and then the next thing you know is a knock on the door. So,… I cannot understand all the lack of international research. And that took me a long time to explain. But now I’ve understood that in Italy they never came to terms with what happened. Very recently I have come to understand that. Now, that would explain why there are no Italians who researched. Other people? I don’t know, it’s strange. Even the use of gas, take that as an example. Look how long it has taken Del Boca to be heard, 50, 60 years.

R And he is still treated like a pariah.

IC And he is still treated like yeah, like he is from the moon or something. Yeah. So, I don’t really understand it. Because a lot of the information on the gas, as I show in my book, is already published in Italians sources of that time. And it was not a secret. I mentioned here even before the invasion had started, section K, as they called it, set up this advanced unit in Somalia, to support the invasion of Ethiopia They have a twelve and a half hectare facility for chemical weapons near to Mogadishu seventeen warehouses, 35,000 gas masques, for the Italian troops. So if this was not a secret, it is difficult to understand why it is now regarded as some incredibly discovery. It was there all the time. So I can’t really explain that.

I also, by the way, mention in my book on the Debre Libanos massacre the prediction made by doctor Martin. You know this doctor Martin? There was an Ethiopian, a very distinguished Ethiopian called Charles Martin Wärqenäh who as a baby was rescued from Magdala, in 1868, by the British. Taken to England, in India at some point, to be educated, he became a medical doctor. And he came back to Ethiopia to work for Emperor Menelik and Haile Selassie. And he was ambassador in Britain at the time of the Italian occupation. And he wrote he actually published the findings of a research he had done, which were based on what had been written by an Englishmen. He talked about a three day slaughter of civilians in Libya which was a reprisals in October 1911 and he predicted, when he heard that the Italians were going to invade Ethiopia, he made a prediction, that there is a pattern of civilian reprisals, three days, like a medieval, you know, the old medieval three days of doing what you want. And that that was likely to happened in Ethiopia. And he warned the members of the League of Nations, that if the Italians invade Ethiopia, this is exactly what might happen, which is based entirely on his analysis of what had happened in Libya. It was Richard Pankhurst to do this to my attention. And of course he proved to be absolutely right. Anyway that’s a bit of your subject, but interesting non the less.

R But coming back to the chemical war you mentioned before, I mean we have this AGIP plant in Nocra, where people had to work. We know that, but we don’t know anything about the camp.

IC What were they working on?

R That’s my question.

IC Oil or gas?

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22 See Garretson, Peter P., 2012, A Victorian Gentleman and Ethiopian Nationalist. The Life and Times of Hakim Wärqenäh, Dr Charles Martin, Woodbridge: James Currey

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R I don't know, maybe this could also have been a contribution to the chemical war, they conducted here?

IC If it is AGIP, yes. They were working in AGIP plant? I didn’t know that. I have not met anyone who was in Nocra. Who was in Nocra, was it the higher level?

R The higher level no, them were sent to Italy.

IC That’s the very high level, the aristocracy, the royalty.

R And then the higher level remaining was divided to Nocra and Danane.

IC I got the impression that Danane was for lower class.

R So Nocra maybe was for higher level.

IC Or maybe the distinction wasn’t in class, maybe the distinction was in how much a threat people were. People sent to Danane were not a big threat. I’ve only studied the wave of people who were put in Danane for the last six weeks before Graziani was relieved of his position as Viceroy and for one month afterwards, or two months afterward. Well let’s say up to December. First he was taken to Asmara, to recuperate. He was taken out of the system, but he was still around. He was still officially Viceroy, but he had no power. During that time I only looked at the Debre Libanos people. So I have a table in which I try to determine the numbers from Debre Libanos that went to Danane. I can give you those numbers. They are only a fraction of the total who went to Danane. Ok «Victims associated with Debre Libanos area who were sent to Danane in early November», that’s what I call the final attempt to get rid of people associated with the Monastery of Debre Libanos before the Duke of Aosta’s new policy would start to be implemented. And I’m saying that 30 were arrested on the 18th of May 1937, who were the boys. Tebebe Kassa was one of those. So that’s one. Soon after the massacre of Debre Libyans and during June 1937 236 was my best estimate. And they almost all transited through Debre Birhan Prison, which was a military prison, it was like a temporary concentration camp attached to the barracks. Tebebe Kassa was there so he described it to me. Then in May, June and July 1937 separately they collected local residents, they were imprisoned in Debre Birhan and then Nefassilk, there was a prison, I forgot, at Nefassilk. We have to determine, there are two Nefassilsks, one is in Eritrean and one is in Ethiopia. We can find out exactly where it is. They were transferred on the 5th of November 1937 to Danane they were 94, that’s my best estimate, making a total of 360, excluding those who died before reaching Danane. We know that six of these, they were a hundred, six died in Danane, 94 remaining went to…, in Debre Birhan rather, 94 remained to go to Danane. So I know that 360 went in that particular timeframe to Danane from Debre Libanos. And I said that based on the average death rate of more than 50 % it is likely that less than a hundred eighty of these prisoners left Danane alive. Of the 30 young boys, this is an example for you, of the 30 young boys taken from Debre Libanos, during the massacre at Debre Libanos, and put into Danane, sixteen of them died. And that is a reliable figure given to me by one of those who survived. They all knew each other. They were all school boys. So that again is slightly over 50 %.

R What is the basis for this table?

IC The basis is a combination of telegrams and more importantly the testimony of Tebebe Kassa himself and the evidence given to me of what was going on during the massacres. There were two massacres of Debre Libanos, and, which are in the Studi Piacentini23. And talking to the people who gave

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evidence, I was able to piece together like some went to Debre Birhan, and then some of those were executed and some were sent to Danane. And then I tried to correlate that with what I found in the Italian telegrams confirming movements. So it's a compromise, no one source, but the best I can do from the available evidence. It is completely independent of Sbacchi figures, which deal with the camp as a whole. This is purely from Debre Libanos. Now, the people who came to the camp from other places I don't know. Have you seen this picture by the way?

R No, I wanted to ask you, are there any pictures of the camp?

IC Well, I got this of the Internet. But it is particularly interesting for me. Because firstly Danane is written on the door, so it probably is Danane, they appear to be Ethiopians, not Somalis, they also appear to be quite well dressed, they have not come from a bad situation, so I'm saying that they could be, probably might be Ethiopians from Debre Libanos, because such people were not urban people, they were traditionally dressed, they were quite well dressed. They were churchgoers, they were suddenly taken for no reason. They were not involved in fighting patriots, or long hair and all this. These were ordinary respectable people, including many women, which is consistent with those who came from Debre Libanos. I'm suggesting that this is a typical picture of people who have just arrived. They are not suffering. They are in shock maybe, they have just arrived. So I'm telling the reader this is probably typical of those people.

R Is it the only photo of Danane?

IC There is another photo, which I haven't published, on the Internet which shows outside the camp, shows the gateway or something, and it looks like a normal street scene. Then there is another picture, which I have published, of inside Danane, this one. I got this of the Internet. All my pictures have a citation, where they have come from. This is quite interesting. I don't know exactly what it shows, but it is clearly inside a courtyard and this is most important, the aerial photograph of Danane concentration camp.

R But from the British Air Force or who did it?

IC I got this of the Internet and it has Italian names and markings.

R This is clearly looking like a camp, here we can see really the camp architecture.

IC Yes. And this needs further research. I mean I can't put too much on Danane, otherwise people say «Why this isn't a book on Danane?» This is a book on the massacre of Debre Libanos. But you have to tell them something otherwise they don’t understand what you are talking about. So I had to cut at some point. But this needs further research. And this is not the full website. But there is a website at the museum of intolerance, and they have information on Danane. I have to complete this citation. So this is an important source. And I say «In 1938 some of the prisoners were transferred to a Banana plantation in Jenale». Have you ever come across that. OK this is important the site of the banana plantation was Jenale and people were actually moved there not every day I think. It is 40 kilome-

24 http://www.campifascisti.it/scheda_img.php?id_campo=49&id_img=51
25 http://www.campifascisti.it/scheda_img.php?id_campo=49&id_img=40
26 http://www.istoreto.it/amis/foto.asp?idfot=213&id=115
27 The aerial photography was taken on order of Graziani on July 7th, 1937, developed in laboratories at Mogadishu, which shows 114 tents inside the camp at that time (see also Ottolenghi, Gustavo, 1997, Gli Italiani e il colonialismo. I campi di detenzione italiani in Africa, Milano: Sugarco, p. 165).
tres from Danane concentration camp. And I got that from Tekle-Tsadik Mekuria in 1998, 12 years ago. So that’s an important place. It’s obviously a local place name and it probably still exists.

R So what is your next project, I mean you are to publish three books, one on the Graziani attack, one on Debre Libanos and the third book is about?

IC The massacre of Addis Abeba.

R Exactly, so there should be also an Ian Campbell book on the camps?

IC (laughing) I didn’t intend to pursue the Italian period more. Because my leading interest actually was in iconography, which is a completely different subject. And now I’m doing two books on drinking vessels, 20th century Ethiopian drinking vessels. Which again is a different subject. But it is difficult to put this subject down, simply because nothing has been published, which I didn’t realize. When I first started inquiring, who were these people who tried to kill Graziani, I assumed the experts knew. And when I found they didn’t know, I pulled the thread, like you pull your thread out of the trousers, and it doesn’t stop. (laughing) For no other reason. So I started now compiling something on prisons. And I didn’t finish it. And I said, «Let me publish what I have done». I took out the section on prisons. But it is a very interesting subject.

R So you should do something on prisons or not?

IC If it could be enough for a book. Many people have died now. But yes, it’s a very interesting subject. And someone needs to look into it.

OK, it says here, yes, «from August 1937 until the camp was overrun by the British in June 1941, Colonello Mazzucchetti», that’s the name, he was commandant at Danane, «some officials of the Italian colonial administration which is well known to have riddled with corruption, had lucrative banana concessions. And sugar cane», that was the other thing. «Sugar cane plantations, which they were using forced labour from the camp». And I got that from an Affidavit which is in the War Crimes Testimony, by this man who became a judge in the Ethiopian High Court and who was I think, one of the camp doctors. What I say here, «Tekle-Tsadik was among those taken to Danane at this time. In 1938 he was transferred to another prison camp». Also there was a prison camp at Danane.

R So it’s like a sottocampo?

IC It appears then, I have to check the spelling, that there was a camp at Danane, a prison camp. So you need to look into that. Then he was transferred back to Danane. He returned to Ethiopia in 1940. So that’s something else to look into.

This is a beautiful photograph, it’s not a good copy of course, it’s photocopy. (laughing) It makes him look like a monster, with his cigarette hanging out of his mouth and his cap. But maybe he was a good man. I don’t know. But he looks frightening, absolutely terrifying in the pictures.

R Mazzucchetti was all the time commander, or then he was …

IC I got that from his son’s radio, the text. But there is one thing that you might think about looking into: The British took over that camp and imprisoned Italians in it. The British may have records, pho-
tographs of the camp. That could be another source, which are much easier to excess than the Italian sources. Because no-one probably is interested. So the British military sources, how did they enter the camp, what did they find. There must be photographs and reports. And then they used the camp for some period of time. It says, «It is estimated that a 150,000 deportees passed through the camps set up in Italy, and that 10% of the population of Slovenia were interned in such camps». I got that from Walston.

R But that’s the total figure of deportees.

IC Just the Italian camps, just the camps in Italy.

One thing I can’t explain, Danane was a camp «per scopi repressive». If that is so, it doesn’t correlate with it being used to get people just out of the way. Why was it necessary to have a repressive camp? I didn’t quite understand that.

R So it was maybe the idea, but not the practice? But even the practice… Well, it has to be studied more.

IC I have here for you this quotation of … Graziani wants to put the population of Addis Abeba into a concentration camp and he is refused by Lessona. Nonetheless a concentration camp was build, nearby at Akaki, on the outskirts of Addis Abeba on the road leading southeast to the lakes of the Great Riff Valley. «Under commandant Stappacchetti Akaki was used both for political prisoners and as a transit camp for detainees on route to Danane. After Yekatit 12 some 3,000 prisoners were held at Akaki. So that gives you a figure, in tents, cells and barracks, surrounded by barbed wire. And the eyewitness accounts make horrifying reading». So that gives you a figure, which I would have got that from Ministry of Justice. From this Ethiopian.

R This is the Ethiopian report, the two volumes?

IC Yes, and it is very authoritative because the man who is giving this figure, was responsible I think for registering everybody. Secondly he was a high court judge. He is a qualified lawyer, he is not just anybody. He was an educated man.

R He is still living?

IC Not possible I think if he was an adult.

R So there must be the records. On the level of documents, are there any…?

IC They had a lot of documents, when they were preparing this. You know one of the problems is that the archives, the government archives are not easily available. Richard Pankhurst is the one who spent most time trying to get access to these background documents. Also when they were writing the Emperors Auto-Biography, they had a lot of documents. Tekle-Tsadik Mekuria was in charge of the project. And we don’t know where these documents are. I don’t know and people have tried to find them. And than not managed to find them. So we only have what is published, the two volumes. But anyway you are welcome to this, if it will help. And take a photocopy of Walston’s paper.

R Thank you very, very much for your time, I know that you have so little.

IC If I think of anything more, I will let you know.