

Oromo Studies Association

Proceedings



Developing Knowledge and Promoting Justice

Nineteenth Annual Conference
Blackburn Center
Howard University
Washington, D. C., 2005
July 30-31, 2005

and

2006 OSA Abstracts

Edited by Gobena Huluka

Oromo Studies Association
XIX Annual Conference
Proceedings

**Developing Knowledge and
Promoting Justice**

**Blackburn Center
Howard University
Washington, D. C. 20059
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2006 OSA Abstracts

Two Decades of Service and Scholarship

**The University of Minnesota
Coffman Memorial Union
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Minneapolis, MN
July 29-30, 2006**

Edited by Gobena Huluka

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Foreword

The XIXth Annual Conference of the Oromo Studies Association (OSA) was held at the Blackburn Center, Howard University, Washington, D.C., on July 30-31, 2005. The theme of the conference was “Developing Knowledge and Promoting Justice.” OSA conferences are open to the public and it was well attended with about 200 registered participants and others. Most of the attendees were from North America while some came from Europe and Africa that included Oromos and non-Oromo academicians, students, activists, and other professions.

Two distinguished keynote speakers, Dr. Aneesa Kassam and Obbo Ibssa Guutama delivered excellent presentations on their respective topics. Dr. Kassam is an anthropologist by training and has done extensive fieldwork with the Oromo people in both Ethiopia and Kenya, and has prolifically published original findings about her work. She came from the University of Durham, (UK) and spoke on “Father Lamberts Bartels Contributions to Oromo Studies.” Obbo Ibssa Guutama is an Oromo nationalist, a Former Minister of Education during the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE), and a political prisoner for many years during the Derg regime and resides in New York, (USA). He spoke on “The Role of Language in Oromo Struggle for National Libration.” Obbo Ibssa has published his experiences in prison in a book entitled, “*Prison of Conscience*” in 2003, and “*Qooqaa Addaa Afaan Oromoo / Special Oromo Dictionary*” in 2004. These are must have books for anyone interested in Oromo national struggle and Oromo language, respectively. OSA was immensely enriched by the speeches of these legendary scholars. The keynote speeches followed OSA president’s address.

Oromo Studies Association is a multi-discipline organization and that is evident from the scope of presentations at the conference. Thirty different topics grouped into eight panels on Human Rights, Public Health, Torture and Trauma of Political Prisoners, Kushitic Historical and Cultural Traditions, Oromo Language, Culture and Education, Political Economy, Natural Resources and The Current Situations in Oromia were presented. All panels were well attended and the audience actively participated by posing questions and comments. The conference was successfully concluded with OSA business meeting that was open only to active OSA members. The meeting was chaired by the outgoing OSA president Dr. Mekuria Bulcha and OSA members listened to reports, discussed issues, made deliberations and elected officers.

This volume of OSA Proceedings contains eleven papers that were presented at the conference and forty-four Abstracts submitted for 2006 OSA conference to be held in Minneapolis, MN, USA. Most of the Proceedings of the XIXth OSA conference papers are based on vast literature search, data analysis and personal observations. An Oromo teenager authored an article on “Oromo Youth” that features challenges of Oromo youth in diasopra. A few of these papers may also be published in the current Journal of Oromo Studies (JOS) and some of the conference papers will be published only in JOS.

I have made only minor changes during editing of the proceeding papers and the abstracts. Therefore, the views expressed and therein are entirely those of the authors'. The 2006 Abstracts are arranged alphabetically by the author’s first name. I would like to thank all those who sent their paper and abstract on time. The map on the cover page above the Odda tree is solely to indicate the physical location of Oromia and not necessarily drawn to scale.

Gobena Huluka,
Incoming OSA president

OSA President's Report and Opening Remarks

Mekuria Bulcha

Distinguished Guests,

Fellow OSA members, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors of the Oromo Studies Association (OSA), I want to welcome all of you to the 19th Annual OSA Conference. The theme we chose for this conference is *Developing Knowledge and Promoting Justice*. By that we mean it is our responsibility as intellectuals and scholars to develop knowledge which will promote human rights and social justice not only in the interest of the Oromos but all the oppressed peoples under the Ethiopian rule. Indeed, the topics of the papers to be read on the different panels of this conference also reflect that this responsibility is commonly felt by their contributors. But before going into comments on the panels and papers of this conference let me make a few comments about what OSA has achieved so far and is expected to achieve in the future.

During the last 19 years, OSA has held a regular annual conference and conducted many workshops to promote multi-disciplinary studies on the peoples of the Horn of Africa in general and the Oromo people in particular. Consequently OSA has emerged as a broad intellectual movement with the aim to reconstruct Oromo history, culture which has been denigrated by colonial historiography. Today Oromo studies has developed into a distinct body of knowledge and is challenging effectively the negative image depicted by Ethiopianist scholars for more than a hundred years.

That OSA has and is making significant contributions to development of knowledge about the Oromo people is now recognized by both the friends and foes of the Oromo people. For example it is gratifying to see that the works of OSA members are being read and used by other scholars around the world. This recognition is confirmed by the increasing references being made to works in Oromo studies' by scholars from around the world. Surfing on the Internet, one can easily see that a lot is being written by non-Oromos about the Oromo people than ever before. The Oromo people who were made "invisible" for more than a century by Ethiopianist political and academic discourse are now being "discovered" by the outside world. That there is growing interest in Oromo studies is also indicated by the increasing numbers of young scholars who are contacting us for information and advice. What is particularly interesting about this is that those who seek information about the Oromo people are from all corners of the globe.

If you may allow me to mention my own experience as an example, during the last two years I have been contacted by students and researchers seeking information about the Oromo people from Japan, Brazil, some of the Caribbean islands including Cuba, the US, Canada, and from many of the European countries. I am happy to say that two of the researchers who had contacted me in the course of this year are here today. The two young scholars are Alexi Robichaux and Christine Matsuda from the University of Southern California. They will be contributing to the panel on "Oromo Language, Culture and Education" later today. Even from Africa, where the use of the Internet is slowly becoming common, our contacts are becoming frequent these days. Naturally many of our contacts in Africa have been Oromos so far. This year we have a distinguished contributor, Professor Megalommatas, who is from Cairo in Egypt. Thus, it wouldn't an exaggeration if I say our objective of expanding knowledge about the Oromo people and attracting non-Oromos to Oromo studies is being fulfilled.

Though much has been achieved during the last two decades, and the identity of the Oromo people is known internationally today better than ever before, there are great gaps in our knowledge about our history and society. Although much has been done both at home and in the diaspora, much more requires to be done in order to fill the gaps. The history, language and culture of the Oromo people are barely studied and are waiting for exploration by scholars. It is the duty of OSA members to persuade, tutor and advise young scholars to engage in Oromo studies. OSA scholars need to cooperate with other scholars to conduct research and promote knowledge about the peoples of Northeast Africa in general and the Oromo in particular. The future of OSA depends on our ability to recruit young scholars for Oromo studies and our cooperation with non-Oromo scholars engaged in African studies.

There are observers, often among the so-called Ethiopianists, who will dismiss our engagement in Oromo studies as an exercise in “narrow nationalism” or ethnic “essentialism”, and interpret our scholarly critiques of the history and practices of the Ethiopian state as vilification of the Ethiopian Other. We must make it clear to our non-Oromo colleagues and critics that Oromo studies are neither exclusionist nor essentialist exercise which will serve the interest of only the people or vilify others, but an endeavour to develop knowledge which is valuable for the collective development of oppressed people irrespective of their ethnic identity. But as a scholarly voice of the Oromo people, OSA’s first and foremost responsibility is to serve the Oromo people.

This responsibility includes fight against distortion and ignorance which have been sponsored and sustained by an oppressive state system. For more than a century, the Ethiopian state has been using Oromo resources to finance instructions and research projects which were instrumental in distorting the image of the Oromo people. The tradition and practice of image-distortion should be challenged effectively and defeated. At home, our people do not have their own research institutions or have control over their own resources to finance research to challenge the Ethiopianist machinery of distortion. Therefore, OSA has to be in the forefront challenging the distortive discourse of Ethiopianist scholars and politicians about the Oromo people, Oromo cultural traditions and Oromo history.

Having said this, let me give you an overview of the program we have ahead of us for today and tomorrow. We will begin the conference with two Keynote speeches: the speakers, Obbo Ibsaa Guutama and Dr. Aneesa Kassam are distinguished members of the Oromo Studies Association. Dr. Aneesa will speak on Father Lambert Bartels contributions to Oromo studies and Obbo Ibsaa on the role of language in Oromo struggle for national liberation.

One of the recurrent concerns raised at OSA conferences during the last 18 years has been the issue of human rights. Violation of human rights against the Oromo and other oppressed peoples of the state of Ethiopia have been intensified under the present Tigrean minority regime. The 46 page-report on the outrageous violence perpetrated by the regime against the Oromo people issued by Human Right Watch in May 2005 has convinced even those who were most skeptical about Oromo complaints of the regime. The complaints that OSA and other Oromo organizations have been saying for many years was nothing but the truth. In panel I, we have three speakers who will once again raise and discuss the issue of human rights in Ethiopia. The first speaker, Mr. Tarfa Dibaba, will report on the plight of Oromo refugees who were uprooted from their homeland and who live today under horrible conditions in the neighbouring countries such as Kenya and the Sudan. Taking the Ogaden as a case in point, the second speaker, Mrs. Fowsia Abdulkadir will analyze the disproportionate suffering that is being inflicted upon women in conflict situations. The third panelist, Dr. Alemayehu Kumsa, will discuss self-

determination as the ultimate solution to violation of human and people's rights.

Panel II will discuss trauma, which is a consequence of human and peoples rights violations. It is well known that the conquest of the Oromo and other peoples by the Abyssinian kings at the end of the 19th century was a traumatic event in which millions lost their lives. The violence used to consolidate and maintain the Ethiopian state must have been also traumatic for conquered and subjugated peoples at both the individual and collective levels. Although the subjects of the colonial Ethiopian state were exposed repeatedly to traumatizing violence, no scientific investigation is conducted on the consequences so far. The Panel will tell us about the current situation and suggest what we can do about it.

The first speaker, Dr. Teshome Gutteta will discuss the traumatic circumstances of political prisoners in Ethiopia and its impact on the Oromo society. The second speaker, Dr. Gudata Hinika, will look at the consequences of trauma caused by infectious diseases, malnutrition and will discuss the need for organized trauma service in Oromia. The third speaker, Mr. Tarfa Dibaba of the Oromo Relief Association, will with the help of a video film, give us a glimpse of the traumatic conditions in which tens of thousands of Oromos are held in Ethiopian prisons and concentration camps even today.

Panel III will deal with medicine and public health. The focus of the two papers is on HIV-AIDS and the role of culture, cultural values and preventive in containing the spread of the pandemic. Dr. Tesema Taye will discuss the role of early, consistent and multisectoral control strategy in reducing both the prevalence and the incidence of HIV infection. Obbo Begna Dugassa will look at HIV/AIDS from the perspective of women's rights putting the case of Oromo in focus.

Panel IV will discuss history, cultural and religious traditions and identity of the Oromo and other Kustitic peoples of North East Africa. The contributor of the first paper, Professor Megalommatas who is an Egyptologist, will raise historical and ethnological questions pertaining to the historical and cultural links that may have existed between the inhabitants of the ancient kingdom of Meroé and the Oromo people. My paper, the second contribution to the history panel, examines some of the theories about the origins of the idea of Waaqa, the monotheistic religious belief shared by the Kushitic peoples of Northeast Africa in the past. The third speaker, Dr. Aneesa Kassam, will discuss religious change as an indicator of socio-economic change in the Gabra Oromo society in southern Oromia and northern Kenya. Dr. Guluma Gemeda, who is the fourth speaker and a historian, will analyze the Islamization of the Gibe Oromo states in the nineteenth century. His focus is on the Tijaniyya Oromo Muslims of the kingdom of Jimma.

Panel V which is one of the two panels on language, culture and education consists of three speakers. The first speaker, Alexi Robichaux, will analyze the consequences of the policy of Amharization in terms of strengthening the boundaries of ethnonational identity. The second speaker, Obbo Mahdi Muudee, will revisit the mid 1970s and discuss the problem he and his colleagues were confronted with when launching the Bariisaa, the first newspaper in Afaan Oromo. The third panelist, Cathrine Matsuda, will examine the effects of linguistic oppression in Ethiopian education focussing on Haile Selassie's 1942 legislation (Decree No. 3) that made Afaan Oromo a forbidden language and Amharic the official language of the Ethiopian Empire. She will explore the background of the Oromo pursuit of linguistic freedom, considering it in the contexts of international law.

Panel VI will also focus on the Oromo language. The first two speakers, Obbo Ibsaa Guutama and Professor Tilahun Gamta, will discuss respectively, the implementation of the Oromo language as a medium of education and administration and the use of qubee alphabet in

teaching the language at the class room level. The third speaker, Obbo Abdulrashid Abdrahman, will present poems he has written in the Oromo language.

Panel VII will discuss the crucial issue Oromia's political economy from different perspectives. The first speaker, Prof. Girma Gebresenbet, will explore ways and means of making logistics in food production and distribution effective. He will discuss how the reduction of losses in the food production and marketing chain in developing countries will help the reduction of poverty in rural societies. Prof. Bichaka Fayissa and Dr. Demissew Ejara, will discuss the nature and extent of economic vulnerability of the Oromo and other marginalized nationalities in the Ethiopian empire state as a result of its colonial hegemony and control of both political and economic infrastructures. The third speaker, Dr. Abebe Adugna, will make a comparative regional welfare analysis with Oromia under the EPRDF government as his point of departure. No doubt these attempts by our economists will give us interesting insights into the state of our people's welfare.

Panel VIII builds on some of the issues raised in Panel VI and will discuss the state of natural resources and environment in Northeast Africa. The first speaker, Dr. Daniel Ayana will explore the consequences of the 1888-89 Panzootic on the livestock and wildlife resources of the Horn of Africa. The issue raised by the second speaker, Prof. Girma Gebresenbet, is also regional: he will examine the effect of rural transport system on the environment in East Africa. The third speaker, Dr. Gobena Huluka, will discuss the exploitation of Oromia's natural resources by external interests and the loss incurred by the Oromo people (in the context of a globalizing world.)

The focus of the last panel, Panel IX, is the "state of Oromia". The first speaker on the panel, Prof. Asafa Jalata, will discuss the state of Oromo politics touching on some of the issues pertaining to leadership, strategies and tactics, and paradigm change in the changing global political environment. The second contributor, Dr. Gobena Huluka, assess the state of Oromia's natural resources and that of its environment, while the third speaker Obbo Lube Birru will explore the state of Oromo struggle.

We have over 25 interesting presentations and two exciting days ahead of us. But before leaving the stage to the Key note speakers let me go back and tell you very briefly what we have been doing during the last 12 months. At our business meeting held last year at the Georgia State University, Atlanta, OSA members gave the Executive Committee a mandate to set up an OSA Review Committee. Accordingly, I had set up a 5-person Review Committee consisting of Dr. Bonnie Holcomb, Dr. Tilahun Gamta, Professor Bichaka Fayissa, Dr. Mohammed Hassen and Dr. Ezekiel Gabissa in January 2005. Bonnie Holcomb coordinated the work of the Committee, which assessed, among other things, the quality and performance of OSA's annual conferences, reviewed the quality and quantity of articles published by the *Journal of Oromo Studies*, examined the criteria used for the recruitment of members and in the election of officials, and made recommendations for improvement. The committee has done a splendid job and their report will be discussed at our business meeting tomorrow. I will take this opportunity to thank them all for their cooperation.

We have published Volume 12 of *Journal of Oromo Studies*. The volume was edited by Dr. Baxter (the oldest veteran of Oromo studies who celebrated his 80th birthday anniversary in February this year, and Dr. Aneesa Kassam (who is our Key Note Speaker today) in cooperation with Dr. Guluma Gameda, the Chief Editor of JOS. As you will hear in a moment from Dr. Aneesa, the volume of JOS is dedicated to the memory of Father Lambert, the Belgian anthropologist and priest who spent most of his life in Oromia and had contributed enormously

to Oromo studies. We have also produced the 18th Annual OSA Conference Proceedings.

Since our last conference in July 2004, many members of OSA have published their works. Their publications include several books, dozens of articles, and book reviews. These books and the articles are products of several years of hard work. In this connection will like to mention particularly three of the new publications. Two of them are dictionaries written by Dr. Tilahun Gamata and Obbo Ibsaa Guutama respectively. The third book is edited by Dr. Asafa Jalata is called *State Crises, Globalisation and National Movements in Northeast Africa, and published by Routledge*. We have published a list some of the publications in the OSA Newsletter of July 2005 for your information and all those who visit OSA's website. I congratulate the authors of all the publications.

In conclusion, I will like to thank all those persons who have made the organization of this conference possible. First of all I will acknowledge the assistance of the Local Organizing Committee: Dr. Arega Negaro, Dr. Abebe Adugna, Obbo Tufaa Abate and Dr. Tesfa Gammada. Dr. Arega Nagaro deserve especial thanks for helping us in getting the facilities of Howard University for the conference.

I am thankful to OSA executive committee members and others whose assistance has been crucial in the preparations for this conference. I will extend my sincere thanks to Professor Bichaka Fayissa who spent many hours helping me, among other things, with the production of the OSA proceedings. The Howard University has been venue for many of our annual conferences. We were allowed to use this hall and other facilities free of charge. I thank the staff of this University for their generosity. I want to extend warm welcome to all of you who have come from near and far to attend this annual and very important event of the Oromo Studies Association.

The Current State of Oromo Politics: What Should be Done About It?

Asafa Jalata

My fellow Oromos, I request you not to personalize my critical analysis of the current Oromo politics by relating to your personal or organizational views. My reflections are based on many years of research and observations. As far as logic and facts allow me, I am critically and honestly analyzing the current problems of Oromo politics in order to suggest an alternative paradigm that may help in overcoming our debilitating political behavior and activities.

The current political confusion in the Oromo nationalist camp demonstrates that the Oromo national movement has not yet developed a coherent, pragmatic, assertive, and powerful leadership. Consequently, the Oromo movement lacks political maturity and organizational capacity. These situations have created a political space for a few ambitious Oromo individuals or groups who wish to be political leaders to create their weak and amorphous respective political groups that have struggled against one another rather than consolidating the Oromo political camp against the colonizers of the Oromo nation. Each political group has created political confusions for the Oromo national struggle by creating and promoting artificial political issues that do not adequately address the complex and difficulty political problems of Oromo society.

All Oromo liberation organizations, including the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), have failed to precisely define and seek practical solutions for four major and complex Oromo political problems: The first problem is that Oromos still do not have an organizational capacity to defend the Oromo national interest. The second one is the lack of a political mechanism to solve the problem of political fragmentation to effectively unite Oromo political forces to speak and act in unison both domestically and globally. The third problem is the lack of pragmatic political scenarios to deal with the neighbors of Oromos and the international community. The final problem is the lack of political wisdom and experience to develop a paradigm shift in Oromo politics with the changing circumstances of Oromian, Ethiopian, and global politics.

The Lack of Organizational Capacity

Today Oromos have about six liberation organizations, and almost all of their leaders are in exile. About seven political organizations claim that they promote the Oromo national interest in Oromia. Of course, some of these organizations have been formed and controlled by the enemies of the Oromo nation. All these liberation organizations and political organizations could not demonstrate the existence Oromo political muscle during the May election of 2005. One would expect that strong of Oromo liberation organizations would disturb a few polling stations and demonstrate to the international observers that there cannot be political stability in Oromia when Oromos are marginalized. When Tigrayan state elites and their Oromo and Amhara collaborators on one hand, and their competitors, and Amhara and Gurage politicians and their Oromo collaborators, on the other hand, peacefully campaigned and won hundreds of parliament seats in Oromia, how can one be sure that there have been Oromo liberation forces that could have made difference in Oromia?

When Tigrayan and Amhara politicians have been contesting in the heart of Oromia, Oromian cities, some of our politicians have failed to fully comprehend the far-reaching consequence of this event. As the Tigrayan elites have made a diplomatic coup on the Oromo

politics in the name of democracy, the Amhara elites have recently won the international community to their side by the discourse of democracy although both camps do not believe in practical democracy. It should be known to all Oromos and the international community that both the Tigrayan and Amhara political camps are the main enemies of the Oromo people at this time. The independent Oromo voice has not been articulated to the international community in the ways it can understand and be sympathetic to the Oromo cause. Since we have not been playing our political cards correctly, there is no wonder that the Oromo political camp has been degraded to periphery by the international community within a few weeks.

All Oromo liberation and political organizations have failed to demonstrate to the world community and big powers that both the Meles regime and the Amhara-led political parties are illegitimate since the Oromo, the largest nation, and its legitimate political forces were excluded from the election. Rather than doing these, these forces ignored the issues of democracy. To ignore the issues of democracy at this age of globalization is tantamount to committing political suicide. Ethiopian fake “democracy” should not stop Oromo political forces from championing for a genuine and representative multinational democracy. At least Oromo forces should win other colonized nations to the side of the Oromo by promoting the principles and practices of democracy.

The TPLF government has been pressured to open itself for a limited “democracy” in order to receive financial support and more political legitimacy from the international community. The international community has ignored the report of the Human Right Watch that demonstrates that Oromos have been denied their political and human rights, and prevented from freely participating in May 2005 election. Ignoring these realities, the election observes from international community has testified that this election was close to fair and free. How could the election that prevented the Oromo, the largest population group, be close to be fair and free? Do Oromo politicians realize the political consequence of this decision?

When the Tigrayan state elites have military and organizational capacity, the Amhara elites have money and educated manpower. Despite the fact that the Oromo national movement has human resources because of the size Oromo of population, its strategy is only focused on the rhetoric of armed struggle and neglected other forms of political struggle. The Oromo movement has failed to build an organizational capacity that can mobilize Oromo human resources both globally and domestically; it also could not envision strategies and approaches that would allow mass mobilization and participation in the national struggle. It is wrong to limit the Oromo national struggle to armed struggle that is not effective until now. The Oromo movement should have encouraged organizations like the Macha-Tulama Self-Help Association to be a political party and participate in a peaceful political struggle. It should have accepted both armed and legal struggles without directly linking them together. One reason for the lack of the organizational capacity in Oromo society is political fragmentation.

Political Fragmentation

Although the founders of the OLF were wise to create a centralized organization to liberate their people, current Oromo political leaders have lacked political skills, maturity, and tolerance for solving their differences to maintain their organizational and political unity. Some of them opted to withdraw from the OLF and create other organizations that could not excel the OLF. Rather than struggling and solving their organizational problems within the OLF, they chose the process of political fragmentation. After realizing that all of them failed to build the organizational capacity that is required in a national liberation struggle, they formed the United

Liberation Forces of Oromia (ULFO) in 2000. Creating ULFO did not yet solve the problems of political ignorance and fragmentation. Rather than focusing on winning victory for the Oromo nation, Oromo liberation organizations have preferred to compete among one another and subordinated the Oromo national interest to their respective political interest. The objectives of ULFO will be successful only when all political groups subordinate their respective political interest to the Oromo national interest and speak and act as one both domestically and globally.

Almost all Oromo liberation organizations branched out of the OLF without having a fundamental political difference. When one wants to understand the cause for this political fragmentation, two issues stand out: The first one is that the OLF did not have a mechanism of resolving its problems within itself both democratically and peacefully. The second reason is that the Oromo elites compete for political power like Oromo chiefs of the last decades of the 19th century; these chiefs undermined the Oromo *gada* system in some parts of Oromia. These two issues raise a fundamental question about the formation of elites or leadership in Oromo society. There is no question that some Oromo nationalists are committed for the Oromo cause, but they confuse their political ambitions with the Oromo cause. Oromo political leaders have failed to understand that they cannot have real political power before the development of Oromo national power.

I believe that it is positive to have ambitious revolutionary leaders who are committed to promote the Oromo cause by any means necessary. But if such leaders mix priorities by equating their personal political ambitions with the cause of the nation, both their ambitions and the cause of the nation can be lost. Ambition alone is not enough to be a political leader. Like in any area, a person can be an effective leader through hard work and excellence. At the same time, all revolutionaries cannot be national leaders at one time. Without recognizing these principles, if all Oromo revolutionaries struggle to be national leaders without demonstrated leadership expertise and if those who have become leaders resist change of leadership, the Oromo cause is subordinated to personal interests. These conditions have emerged in the Oromo national movement before the creation of Oromo national power and caused the stagnation of the Oromo national struggle.

Oromo society does not have enough educated manpower. If those few who are educated are fighting among themselves rather than fighting against the enemy of the Oromo people, they are repeating the experiences of the Oromo chiefs of the nineteenth century that contributed to the colonization of Oromia. With the current crisis of Oromo politics, most Oromo elites are confused and lost a political direction. Political fragmentation and the political indulgence of insult proved themselves meaningless. Then what should we do about our political fragmentation? What should we do about the formation of an accountable and transparent national leadership that can represent all Oromo interests? If we continue to worship our dual and confusing identity and fail to overcome our political ignorance, we cannot build our organizational capacity that is required for our liberation.

The Danger of Political Dualism and Rigidity

Although the Oromo national struggle led by the OLF has enabled all Oromo branches to retrieve their national name, Oromo, to recognize their country, Oromia, and to write their language in *qubee*, some Oromo elites still have political dualism. However, there are still Oromos who have accepted dual identity -- provincial and Oromo identity. There are also Oromos who see *Orommummaa* in relation to Christianity or Islam. This duality emerges from low level of political consciousness or nationalism. There are Oromo political activists who use

such dualities to bolster their political ambitions. Such dualities have undermined the development of the Oromo national movement. We need be honest about our regional and religious variations and address them publicly.

There are Oromo political activists who combine the demands of democracy and self-determination. There are also who think that the Oromo political demand should be limited to political independence. If these demands are genuinely pursued they are not contradictory. But many Oromo nationalists have wasted their energies by creating such artificial political boundaries between such political demands. If these demands can be implemented through struggle, they can help in creating Oromo national power. Once the Oromo national power with democratic authority emerges, the Oromo nation can give a political direction for both Oromia and Ethiopia. There is no any reason why Oromos oppose to this. However, the serious question to be asked and answered is how these principles can be implemented by preventing the political debacle of 1991 and 1992.

If we continue to only demand for political independence and ignore the demands for democracy, self-determination, and federalism, we continue to further isolate ourselves from big powers that make a difference in global politics. No liberation organization won its victory without a support from important countries. One of the reasons why Oromos were defeated by the Amharas in the last decades of the nineteenth century, by Tigrayans in the 1990s, was the lack of support from global powers. How long can we continue to deny this reality? We must use all possible scenarios for our national struggle; we should stop to use a scenario that is counter-productive for our national cause to promote our perceived personal and organizational interests. We concerned Oromos must demand that all Oromo political leaders and organizations subordinate themselves to the Oromo cause and use all approaches to promote the Oromo struggle through a united front. Particularly, the OLF as the leading organization should come out from its political confusion and the approach of wait and see and show the way.

We must demand that all Oromo political leaders reassess their political positions and stop to hide behind their narrow political circles that are colored by propaganda of regionalism, religion, independence, and democracy and build a united Oromo movement that can speak and act in unison both domestically and internationally. Considering the danger that our people are facing at home today and the role of the international community, Oromo liberation and political organizations need to unite various political scenarios that include self-determination, democracy, federalism, and independence, and also to combine the strategies of armed and legal forms of struggles. While reorganizing various scenarios and strategies of the Oromo struggle, every Oromo political force should know that to be subservient to the political enemy of the Oromo people is a national treason. Oromos should use all possible means to stop Oromo collaborators from their dirty politics. The strategy of only focusing on one approach should end. We need to start to develop a paradigm shift in our political thinking in order to embrace innovative political scenarios and approaches and use them in complementary ways.

The Need for Paradigm Shift

The Oromo people are currently facing state-terrorism, genocide, and massive human rights violations. Both Amhara and Tigrayan elites are struggling in Oromian cities by using their respective Oromo collaborative group, the discourse of democracy, and the support of the international community. Again the international community has showed that it only cares for a fake democracy and not human rights or genuine democracy. The Human Rights Watch declared to the world community that the Oromo nation has been under the total control of the

Tigrayan regime and could not participate in the “democratic” election of May 15, 2005. It also declared that prominent Oromo organizations were not allowed to participate in this election. The world powers ignored all these and almost unanimously endorsed this election as democratic.

Whatever the Ethiopian government will do may be considered democratic and legal by big powers. There is no doubt that such moves will increase the violations Oromo human rights. All lands may be commoditized and transferred to Habasha elites. If these happen, most Oromos are going to be tenants and servants again. The degradation of Oromo history and culture will increase. Most Oromos are going to be limited to rural areas or may be forced into reservation camps like Native Americans. Under these possibilities, the Oromo national struggle cannot afford the status quo of wait and see. Further, in Oromia, several nominal political parties have currently emerged and given a democratic credibility for the Tigrayan-led authoritarian terrorist regime without creating political power for the Oromo nation.

In this era of globalization, global capitalism is deepening its activities in Oromia and Ethiopia in the name of democracy without having commitment for social justice, self-determination, and genuine democracy. As it captured Oromia via Ethiopian colonialism in the last decades of the nineteenth century, global capitalism can give a final death below to Oromia, if Oromos do not act wisely in a united way. Since Western powers are stakeholders in the affairs of Oromia and Ethiopia, if we do not play wisely with their political cards we can be total losers. All these conditions require a paradigm shift now in the Oromo national movement.

This paradigm shift should first focus on the issues of leadership, united front, and total mass mobilization and participation in the Oromo national struggle. The problems of Oromo elites, leadership, and united front should be openly confronted to find adequate solutions. The formation of Oromo elites is at its formative stage. At this stage, our society needs wise leaders more than any time who can build a democratic national authority that is accountable, consultative, and representative. The Oromo national movement also requires the emergence of a core of leaders who can be the symbolic expression of the Oromo democratic authority and Oromo society. We should resist those Oromo politicians who promote the politics of fragmentation and chieftaincy. We should struggle to form the democratic national authority that can make the objective of a united front reality. The Oromo national movement should forcefully struggle for self-determination and a genuine multinational democracy to convince the international community and the neighbors of Oromos that Oromos can bring stability to Oromia, Ethiopia, and the Horn of Africa

The broadly-based national democratic authority should mobilize all sectors of Oromo society both domestically and globally. Political mechanisms that can enable almost all Oromos to actively participate both in democratic and national struggles should be adopted. The current domestic politics in the Ethiopian Empire and global politics require Oromos to fully struggle for their democratic rights in Oromia. Oromos cannot afford to leave a political space for Habashas and being forced to vote for them. The struggle that Oromo students started in Oromia should be expanded and be part of the struggle for democracy. We should employ all approaches that combine armed struggle and the movement for democracy. These two tactics should be complementary.

Globally we must identify approaches that can win global powers for our struggle. We must use all possible approaches that can help in removing the intermediary position of Habasha political power between Oromos in the global interstate system. We should not shy away to use the discourse of democracy to win our neighbors and the international community to our side.

Our motto must be “Mirgan yabanis bitan yabanis walga’iin kooradhuma.” We should struggle to capture state power both in Oromia and beyond to create and institutionalize a multinational democracy by replacing the Ethiopian colonial and intermediary state. To save our people from the danger that is looming on them, we need to get access to state power and use it to improve the deplorable condition of our people.

Conclusion

There is only one Oromo liberation organization that has a better capacity and credibility to facilitate the paradigm shift I have mentioned above if it wants to save itself from further disintegration and promote the Oromo struggle in a better and effective way. This organization is the OLF. The OLF has more moral power and resources than other organizations to promote the strategy of building the Oromo national democratic authority by calling an Oromo national conference consisting of all Oromo sectors, Oromo liberation organizations, and political parties that can commonly assess the successes and the failures of the past and develop a new strategy of the Oromo national struggle. The responsibility of all Oromo nationalists and organizations is to recognize that we cannot continue our national struggle in the old ways and be ready to collaborate with any Oromo political force that can map our political future in innovative, practical, and effective ways.

I recommend that the Oromo Studies Association (OSA) establish a committee of senior scholars who have experience with Oromo politics to critically study the current problems of Oromo politics and present its findings with recommendations to Oromo liberation movements, political parties, representative of Oromo sectors, and prominent Oromo individuals within three months. The committee should also suggest other steps that Oromo society can take to save itself from further destruction in the case that Oromo liberation forces and parties ignore its recommendations.

Amharization: Strengthening the Boundaries of Oromoness

By Alexi Robichaux

Ethiopia has undergone radical regime change in the last one hundred years, yet while the political scene has changed much, very little change has been made in regards to Ethiopia's policy of *Amharization*. A result of prolonged inter-ethnic conflict, *Amharization*, stems from Emperor Menelik's conquests during the late 19th century through which Abyssinia "expanded into the much larger Ethiopia of the present day" bringing Abyssinian culture to Oromia¹ primarily through the imposition of their language, Amharic (Knutsson 1969, 86). Briefly stated: "[t]he purpose of *Amharization* was to create a homogenous Ethiopian society and identity through the medium of Amharic, the language of the dominant minority" (Bulcha 1994, 91). *Amharization* then was a policy imposed on ethnic groups by the Amhara—the ruling ethnic elite—in order to create an Ethiopian national identity. But to describe *Amharization* merely as a

Modern Oromia



Figure 1 from Jalata's *Oromia & Ethiopia*, p. 5

nation-building tool would ignore its more cruel and racist intentions: the oppression of the Oromo² identity. With the Oromo as the main target of the Amhara's policy of *Amharization*, the relations between these two groups has been anything but friendly and "much of the history of Ethiopia can be viewed as a struggle between the Amhara and the Oromo" (Baxter 1978, 283).

¹ 'Oromia' is just one of the many names that this southern region of Ethiopia has been called during the past century. Other names include "Oromoland" and "Gallaland."

² It is important to note that historically "the Oromo people have been better known outside Ethiopia as 'the Galla', but that is a name which none use themselves and which they resent" (Baxter 1978, 284). Bulcha provides a timeframe for this change by noting that in "the pre-1974 literature the Oromo do not call themselves by that name. Since the term *galla* is pejorative it is now abandoned" (Bulcha 1995, 36).

Prohibiting the Oromo language served as the primary means through which the Amhara attempted to transform the Amhara identity into a national one.

This paper deals with the relations between the Amhara and the Oromo during the mid to late 20th century and focuses primarily on the effects of *Amharization* on the Oromo group identity. My paper analyzes both the legislated and unlegislated components of *Amharization*, arguing that, rather than transforming the Oromo into Amhara, Ethiopia's oppressive language policies incited an Oromo reaction to a system of ethnic stratification while simultaneously strengthening ethnic boundaries between the Oromo and the Amhara.

Amharization Legislation

The Amhara both currently, and during the past century, have maintained themselves as Ethiopia's ruling elite. *Amhara* itself "is the name of the tribal group from the north western corner of Ethiopia which is coincident with the old kingdom of Abyssinia" (Baxter 1978, 283). The Amharas' self-association with the old Abyssinian kingdom connects them to what they believe to be even a more legitimate claim to superiority and the right to rule: their attachment "without interruption from the dynasty" of "the Queen of Sheba, and King Solomon of Jerusalem."³ The Amhara represent only 30% of Ethiopia's population, but since the rise of the Ethiopian empire, which occurred in the late 1880's after Menelik successfully conquered Oromia, "Abyssinian institutions became the dominant ones in the country and what passes today for Ethiopian" is in reality "of Amhara-Tigre society" imposed on Oromos through *Amharization* (Bulcha 1997a, 30). The motivation behind *Amharization* can be traced to the Amhara's belief in their cultural superiority and their fear of the Oromo undermining their political sovereignty (Baxter 1978, 285).

Whether named euphemistically *Ethiopianization* or *Amharization*, the Amharas' efforts to enshrine their culture as the national Ethiopian identity essentially consisted of the "de-Oromization" of the majority of their subjects. Recognizing the crucial role language plays in group identity formation and maintenance, the Amhara ruling elite quickly sought to prohibit the proliferation of written *afaan Oromoo*⁴. Such was the case in the opposition and persecution the evangelical missionary Onesimos Nasib faced from the Abyssinian clergy. During the early 20th century, Onesimos pioneered written *afaan Oromoo* and began to translate many texts, including the Bible. His translations, rather than pleasing the Abyssinian clergy, evoked a response comparable of the Catholic Church's outrage towards Luther's translating the Bible into German—"the clergy claimed Onesimos provoked conflict and his works were seen to encourage the rejections of the imperial language and religion" (Bulcha 2002, 141)—Onesimos was seen by the Abyssinian clergy as "everything that the Amharas did not expect or wanted their Oromo subjects to be" (Bulcha 1995, 51). But this rejection of the Oromo Bible by the Abyssinian clergy symbolizes more of a rejection of the language in which it was written, *afaan Oromoo*, than the Bible itself (Bulcha 2002, 142).

As a predecessor, perhaps even the inspiration behind, Haile Sallassie's later legislating "amharizing" policies, Onesimos' persecution reveals that the "literate Abyssinian 'high' culture could co-exist only with spoken *afaan Oromo*" (Bulcha 1994, 96). This fear of the Amhara elite

³ See "Article 2" of the *Revised Constitution of the Empire of Ethiopia* (Proclamation No. 149 of 1955, *Negarit Gazeta*, 15, 2, 1955). Beginning in 1942, all of the Ethiopian Empire's laws were published in the *Negarit Gazeta*, I have referenced the Revised Constitution as such only to remove any initial confusion but will now reference legislation appropriately as published in the *Negarit Gazeta*.

⁴ *Afaan Oromoo* is the written form of the Oromo language and has been prohibited in public, whether through publication or education, by multiple Ethiopian regimes. *Amharization* then refers to such prohibition, even before officially legislated in 1942 which was carried out as seen in the case of Onesimos Nasib.

that written *afaan Oromo* would undermine their authority (96) reemerges as the motivation behind *Amharization* legislation as an effort to create an Ethiopian national identity. Limiting the publication of laws to the English and Amharic languages (*Negarit* 1942, Art.22) ostracized the Oromo by denying *afaan Oromoo* and reinforcing the Amhara's domination of political power and their connection with European imperialism. An even more significant piece of *Amharization* legislation was the Imperial Decree, No. 3 of 1944, which stipulated that "the general language of instruction throughout Ethiopia shall be the Amharic Language" (*Negarit* 1944, Art.13). The Emperor's decree no doubt was a direct response to Onesimos' advancement of written *afaan Oromoo*. As if to confirm that everyone understood *afaan Oromoo* was unwelcome in Ethiopia, the Revised Constitution of 1955 explicitly declared Amharic the official language of Ethiopia (*Negarit* 1955, Art.125). These pieces of legislation constitute what I feel to be the core of *Amharization* but are far from constituting *Amharization* in its entirety.

Simply discussing national legislation tempts us to ignore the localized and often crude application of this legislation, something we must do in order to fully understand the true nature of a law. Baxter gives two commonplace examples that characterize the effects Oromo felt as a result of *Amharization* legislation. Baxter describes that he once witnessed "a case between two Oromo before an Oromo speaking magistrate that had to be heard in Amharinya [Amharic]" and that he attended a church service at which the preacher and congregation were Oromo but the sermon was delivered in Amharic only to be translated into Oromo (Baxter 1978, 288). Besides being an inconvenience, the imposition of Amharic upon Oromos in everyday activities functioned as a constant reminder that they were not "Ethiopian"—true "Ethiopians" were thought to speak only Amharic. Unfortunately, such happenings were both commonplace and widespread as a result of *Amharization*; but rather than discussing individual responses to *Amharization* I will analyze its effects on the Oromo group identity. Yet, before embarking on my analysis, we must first examine what elements—be they cultural, religious, or linguistic—serve as the boundaries of the Oromo identity.

The Boundaries of Oromoness: Language, Religion, Lifestyle, Value-system

Oromoness, or *Oromumma*⁵, refers to everything that constitutes a person as a member of the Oromo group. In the case of the Oromo, language dichotomizes the Amhara from the Oromo and "is important in defining who is an Amhara and who is an Oromo" (Baxter 1978, 288). Language serves as such a strong ethnic boundary that Bulcha identifies language as the element which mostly "differentiates the Oromo externally from their neighbors" (Bulcha 1997b, 326). Oromos are far from a linguistic or cultural minority, although, their language differentiates them from other ethnic and linguistic groups it is these other groups, such as the Amhara, that deserve minority status. The following excerpt provides a description of the Oromo both in relation to larger Ethiopia and in relation to their own members:

The Oromo, who are the most populous ethnic group in the Horn of Africa, number more than 20 million, and constitute about 50% of Ethiopia's inhabitants. They speak a Cushitic language. A large percentage of Oromos practice Islam; the rest are Protestants, Orthodox Christians and Catholic, while a small percentage practice traditional Oromo religion (Bulcha 1997a, 30).

⁵ I have yet to find this synonym for *Oromoness* used by anyone else than Gemetchu Megerssa and for further clarification have included his rather precise definition: "*Oromumma*, derived from the name Oromo, refers to all those elements that constitute the Oromo personality" (Megerssa 1996, 93).

Bulcha's juxtaposition of language and religion points to another difference between the Amhara and the Oromo: a difference of religion. Although the Oromo might be dispersed between a few religious groups, there are for the most part not many Coptic Orthodox Oromos. In this way religion functions more as a negative boundary of *Oromoness*: establishing Coptic Orthodoxy as non-Oromo. Religion also played a significant role in the creation of written *afaan Oromoo*, as evangelical missionaries such as Onesimos Nasib were actually responsible for most of the literacy, however rare, that existed among the Oromo during the early 20th century. Even the commonly accepted criteria for being considered an Amhara—"adopting the observances of the Coptic Church, an Amharic name and lifestyle and, particularly, by using the Amharic language as one's first tongue" (Baxter 1978, 288)—demonstrates this same interdependence of religion and language in differentiating between the two groups.

Language and religion—the case of Onesimos Nasib demonstrates that at some point they interrelate—function as cultural boundaries dichotomizing *Oromoness* from Abyssinian/Amhara culture. If, however, we imagine *language* and *religion* as two lines that intersect (represented in "Figure 2"⁶ as (L_a, R)), we see that we need two additional lines (ethnic boundaries) in order to enclose an area (*Oromoness*): *lifestyle* and *value-system*. Both the lifestyle and value system of the Oromo also differentiate Oromos from Amharas and other local ethnic groups. In this way lifestyle and value-system function as borders of *Oromoness*. Knutsson observes that ethnic

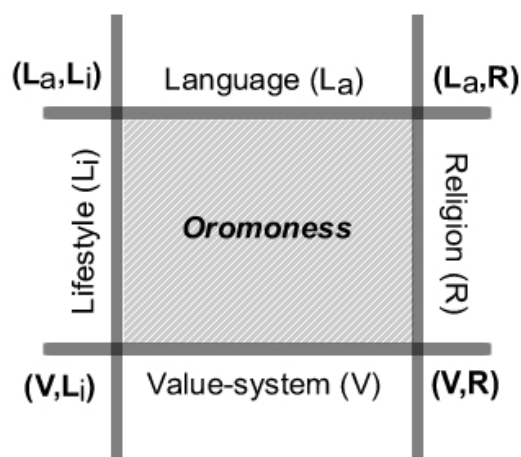


Figure 2. A visualization of the boundaries of Oromoness

identity with many Oromos "is intimately connected with the total way of life on their dry, dusty and overgrazed plains" (Knutsson 1969, 90). The Oromo for the most part are farmers, some of whom own cattle which they allow to graze on their plains. In fact, Lewis notes that he "knew Oromo farmers whose lives were devoted to their agriculture, families, and local community affairs" (Lewis 1996, 41). For many Oromos the traditional means of sustenance also plays a central role in defining who they are as a group. Notably, among the Arsi⁷ "the few who leave

⁶ I admit that such a visualization might take certain concepts too literally but I do gain some encouragement from Megerssa's statement that "as opposed to other cultural and religious groups," in the case of the Oromo "the cultural boundaries of personhood, nationhood and religion are so coextensive that they are rendered practically interchangeable" (Megerssa 1996, 93) and am only trying to visually represent this interchangeability.

⁷ The Arsi, or sometimes Arssi, represent one of the many subgroups that comprise the Oromo people. Although composed of many subgroups spread across a large geographical area, some subgroups even beyond the borders of modern Ethiopia, the Oromo are known for their remarkable homogenous culture. Megerssa contributes this phenomenon to their common dependence on ancient and universally Oromo religious and philosophical methods of

their cattle or those who have lost them and move into towns are no longer regarded as ‘real’ Arsi” (Knutsson 1969, 90). Although a specific example, the case of the Arsi typifies how lifestyle functions as an ethnic boundary of *Oromoness*.

Not only does the Oromo lifestyle differentiate the Oromo from other ethnic groups, it also influences and connects with their value-system. Given the agricultural nature of their lifestyle, in which fellow Oromos share common “clanlands” for their mutual benefit (Knutsson 1969, 89), it is not surprising that the “Oromo are brought up to resist authority based on wealth or political position” (Baxter 1978, 285). The relative equal status of Oromo seems to be a result of this traditional lifestyle in which all share in a common pursuit of agriculture⁸. We can visualize the convergence of the agro-pastoral lifestyle and egalitarian value-system, in which for the most part no “Oromo can order another to do anything” (Baxter 1978, 285), as point (V, L_i) in “Figure 2” and see that it too joins two boundaries. The Oromo lifestyle and value-system interrelate and function as ethnic boundaries that demarcate *Oromoness*. *Oromoness* can then be defined as the interchangeability, or commonality, of *afaan Oromoo*, non-Coptic Christianity, agro-pastoral lifestyle, and basic egalitarian/democratic principles.

Amharization and Its Effects on Oromo Ethnic Boundaries

One of the most noticeable effects of *Amharization* on Ethiopia in general, but more specifically Oromia and the Oromo, is the social and economic stratification of ethnic groups. As previously stated, the Amhara dominate the upper-levels of this stratification, ruling both politically and economically, which “is reflected in the sphere of factional politics, where the leaders are usually Amharas” (Knutsson 1969, 96). The stratification of political power seems to be one aspect of *Amharization* that has affected the Oromo. The Oromos’ traditional system of governing (*gaadaa*) “nowadays serves mainly as a symbol of Oromo political ethos and achievement” (Abbink 1997, 161) more than an actual functioning institution. But to say that the stratification as a result of *Amharization* has removed a boundary of *Oromoness* would be incorrect. Since political power does not serve as a constituent of *Oromoness* and as “the attainment of a governorship does not make an Amhara of a Galla [Oromo]” (Barth 1998, 27), the disappearance of the *gaadaa* as a functional governmental model does not necessitate its disappearance as an egalitarian value-system. This is not to say that some Oromos have not assimilated into Amhara culture in order to gain political power or higher economic status, but such assimilation is limited only to Oromos who can obtain the necessary political connections and economic capital: “one must remember that to act the part of a *poor* Amhara would be of little avail since one of the basic ingredients in the Amhara ethnic status is its very connection with economic and political superiority” (Knutsson 1969, 98). For the majority of Oromos, the stratification of political power in addition to making the Oromo subservient to the Amhara has only polarized the differences between their lifestyles and values systems. The stratification of power has highlighted the difference between the quasi-democratic Oromo and the imperial Amhara and referring back to “Figure 2” we see that by fortifying one ethnic boundary we automatically influence the others.

thought (Megerssa 1996, 93). Anyone interested in learning more about these subgroups should turn to “Figure 1.1” in Jalata’s *Oromia & Ethiopia* which provides an excellent genealogy of the Oromo confederations and subgroups.

⁸ The tradition Oromo lifestyle is greatly influenced by the *gaadaa*, a system of rule “grafted on an agro-pastoral way of life” (Abbink 1997, 161) and one that appears to promote a somewhat democratic system of governance. Abbink asserts that this “democratic assembly system” of the Oromo political tradition could be “accommodated in a new political system of federal government” (Abbink 1997, 161). I mention this to emphasize the point that the Oromo value-system is closely related to their lifestyle which seems to employ basic democratic principles.

The ethnic stratification does not merely pertain to the Oromo lifestyle and value-system. Just as *value-system* and *lifestyle* (V, L_i) intersect so do *value-system* and *religion* (V, R) and *language* and *religion* (L_a, R). My purpose in mentioning this is to reinforce the concept that cultural boundaries are interrelated and where one boundary such as *lifestyle* is manipulated, so too, could others be automatically influenced. The conversion of many Oromos to Islam as a reaction to encroachment by Coptic Christianity (Clapham 1975, 77) demonstrates this point of interchangeability. Due to the manipulation of the boundary *religion*, the boundary *value-system* was also affected as many Oromos, upon conversion, adopted an Islamic rather than a traditional Oromo value-system. The conversion of many Oromos from their traditional form of traditional religion to Islam suggests that *Amharization* has in some way affected Oromoness, but we must distinguish between influencing an ethnic boundary and altogether removing an ethnic boundary. If we recall that religion functions more as a negative boundary defining what *Oromoness* is not, we realize that whether Islamic or evangelical Christians, *Oromoness* is still not Coptic or Ethiopian Orthodoxy. The particular faith of certain Oromos might have been influenced by *Amharization*, but religion still functions as an ethnic boundary dichotomizing the Oromo from the Amhara by defining the Amharas as a particular faith and the majority of the Oromos as not that.

This relates to Barth's conclusion that in tracing ethnic groups we must not define them by their current culture because "the elements of the present culture of that ethnic group have not sprung from the particular set that constituted the group's culture at a previous time" (Barth 1998, 38). Viewing the Oromo as an ethnic group that "has a continual organizational existence with boundaries (criteria of membership) that despite medications have marked off a continuing unit," (38) we see that although modified by *Amharization*, the Oromos' religion, lifestyle, value-system, and most resiliently *afaan Oromoo* have persisted as demarcations between Oromoness and Abyssinian/Amhara culture.

Amharization, although modifying the boundaries of *Oromoness*, has in no way diminished it as an identity. In regards to boundaries such as *religion* and *value-system*, I have demonstrated that *Amharization* has definitely influenced and altered them, however, they still serve as boundaries of *Oromoness*. *Language* has proven itself to be the one boundary that has actually remained, and even been strengthened, as a result of *Amharization*. Clapham concludes that *Amharization* left the Oromo very little options other than "quietism, partial assimilation through the few and inadequate available channels, or revolt" (Clapham 1975, 81). Surprisingly he does not make mention of the one technique which most effectively maintained the Oromo group identity: their continual speaking of *afaan Oromoo* and their ongoing efforts to develop and advance written *afaan Oromoo*. Despite the social stratification of the ethnic groups, the consequence of the Ethiopian Empire's blatant favoritism of the Amhara, the Oromo have still maintained their group identity through the maintenance of their mother tongue and the furtherance of it in written form. As a reaction to the prohibition of their language, the Oromo seized *afaan Oromoo* as a determinant of their ethnicity by passively resisting *Amharization* via continually speaking *afaan Oromoo* and their organizations such as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). Baxter's telling of being ushered to the corner of a room where "the Oromo members usually sit together" (Baxter 1978, 290) reveals that despite the legal prohibition on *afaan Oromoo*, Oromos everywhere resisted and continued to speak their mother tongue. More overtly, the OLF, by charging itself with promoting *afaan Oromoo* literacy (Bulcha 1994, 110), rallied Oromos behind language, fortifying it as their strongest ethnic boundary. All this, in conjunction with the writings of intellectuals and the passionate protests and publications of

students⁹, contributed to not only maintaining but also strengthening *afaan Oromoo* as an ethnic boundary. In this way *Amharization*, although modifying the boundaries of *Oromoness*, failed to eliminate any and instead incited a reaction from the Oromo that strengthened language as an ethnic boundary and automatically highlighted the difference between the Oromo and the Amhara.

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⁹ Not wanting to stray too far from my original thesis, I will leave the detailed explanation of these groups' actions to the experts. Mekuria Bulcha in "Modern Education and Social Movements in the Development of Political Consciousness: The Case of the Oromo" fully documents both the actions and contributions of intellectuals and students in the development of an Oromo consciousness.

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Teaching Ethnic Divergence: Examining the History and Effects of Linguistic Oppression in Ethiopian Education

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Language is the binding that connects everything together in my life. My major at the University of Southern California is Comparative Literature, evidence of the importance that I attach to language in my exploration of academic possibilities. The power of words, sentences, paragraphs and phrases is something that I feel very keenly; it is through them that I make connections between my life as a Hapa-Haole Hawaiian woman and the things that I have the opportunity to study. One of these opportunities arose in a class based on cultural relativism and the law, where Alexi and I were asked to research prohibited cultural practices, which eventually led me here. I believe there is no single cultural practice more inherently vital to the survival of a people than language. Robert Dunbar states in “Minority Language Rights Under International Law” that:

“The question of linguistic minorities has taken on a particular urgency [in the past few years] because of the increasing recognition of the threat of extinction faced by many minority languages. Linguists estimate that up to 90 per cent of the between 4,000 and 6,000 languages currently spoken world-wide could disappear by the end of the 21st century” (Dunbar, 90).

He goes on to say that one of the major causes of this linguistic extinction is forced assimilation, a policy that the Ethiopian government thinly disguised under the banners of nationalism and patriotism for the 20th century and beyond. The Amharic language was imposed on the various ethnic groups that inhabited Ethiopian territory through various means, including administrative institutions, settlement of Amharas in non-Amharic regions and the Orthodox Christian Church. Although the Ethiopian empire encompassed at least six different nations of people¹⁰, none felt the pain of this agenda more acutely than the Oromo. More than any other group, the Oromo suffered under the policy of Amharization, specifically because of their language, afaan Oromoo. As Mekuria Bulcha points out, “since it embodies a different culture and symbolizes a separate identity, the Oromo language was (and still is) considered by Abyssinian elites, particularly by the Amhara, as an obstacle to the expansion of ‘Ethiopian identity’ and the growth of Ethiopian ‘Nationalism’” (1997, 325). Although historically the language was always condemned by the Ethiopian rulers, Oromo was completely and vehemently outlawed in a slew of legislation passed between 1941 and 1945 by Haile Selassie’s regime. The focus of my presentation is the prohibition of afaan Oromo in education, an issue of central importance to both the Amharization campaign and the eventual mobilization of the Oromo people. Although I know that a great deal of what I will present may be familiar history for many of you, it still remains fresh for people like me who are just beginning to learn about the Oromo. Regardless, I believe that it is always important to look backward to the beginnings in order to understand what the future can be.

The Oromo is an indigenous group from within the boundaries of present-day Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, and other countries. It is considered to be the second largest linguistic group south of the Sahara. In Ethiopia, the Oromo have splintered into dozens of smaller groups, some

¹⁰ The number of ethnic groups that historically existed within Ethiopian borders is uncertain, as anthropologists and politicians have both created artificial divisions within nations and ignored boundaries between groups in available literature.

of which were even in conflict through the middle of the twentieth century (Lipsky, 1-20). This has led some anthropologists, such as Karl Knutson, to believe that there is no such thing as an Oromo nation, that because dialects and customs emerge in different areas, new boundaries are established and new groups thereby formed. But to make that mistake in assessing the Oromo people in Ethiopia is to ignore the history of the Oromo's plight and to ignore Fredrick Barth's arguments in the book where Knutson's assertions are published, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*. According to Barth, the boundaries of a group cannot be ascribed according to arbitrary criteria, such as territories or customs of convenience. Instead, boundaries can be found in what he calls "socially significant factors" (Barth, 15), things that members of the group see as relevant in determining membership.

The Oromo group encompasses Jews, Muslims, Coptic Orthodox and Protestants Christians, and Oromo traditional religion; they have historically represented serfs, the middle class, upper class, and intellectual elite; they inhabit several different parts of Ethiopia and indeed, many other countries in Africa and around the world (Lipski, 12). These differences, Barth argues, do not mean that impenetrable cultural boundaries have been erected. It instead begs the question of what factor(s) unite the group in question (Barth, 29). The "socially significant factors" that determine the boundaries of the Oromo ethnic group may have seemed ambiguous to scholars in the past, but in the last fifty years, it has become increasingly apparent that afaan Oromoo, their language, is at the core of the Oromo group identity, and constitutes their ethnic boundary within the different groups of the Ethiopian Empire (Bulcha 1994, 91). Because their language is the most important factor to the Oromo group identity, afaan Oromoo became the perfect target for the Amharic leadership's policy of Amharization.

In the late 19th century, the Oromo and other ethnic groups were conquered by an Abyssinian force comprised primarily of Amharic people, and made to be a part of the Ethiopian Empire, under the Emperor Menelik the 2nd. The Amharic ethnic group was the established ruling class from the beginning of the Ethiopian nation, and as such the Amhara felt it was appropriate to take measures toward the prevention of new ethnic groups overwhelming the Amharic quality of Ethiopian life¹¹. They felt threatened by the sheer demographic force of the Oromo people who doubled the Amharic population, and under the guise of nationalism and peacekeeping began to "Amharize" the ethnic groups under their rule. The Oromo were no longer called by that name; they were called by the Amharic word *Galla*, which means "other," a powerful reminder of the status Oromo culture had been relegated to even in their own land¹². An Amharization policy was made official and enforced by consecutive Ethiopian regimes during entirety of the 20th century, though the oppression of the Oromo people had certainly begun centuries before. From the early 1900's until the end of the century, Amharization was pursued by the Ethiopian leadership with extreme implications for the Oromo ethnic group (Bulcha 1994, 91).

Amharization was focused largely on removing afaan Oromoo from the Ethiopian empire because of the importance of the language to the Oromo group identity. The Amhara instituted an educational system, incorporating both secular and religious schooling, which would presumably purge the Oromo communities of their language (Pankhurst, 307-314). Oromo literacy, though extremely limited, had made some advances in the years prior to the reign of

¹¹ Barth notes that under certain situations, including colonization of an ethnic group, an interethnic relationship can develop in which one or more parties gain nothing; political influence disrupts the natural establishment of symbiotic relationships (Barth, 36). This is certainly the case with the Oromo, who gained only persecution and hatred from the Amhara ethnic group.

¹² This name *Galla*, now considered an ethnic slur by the Oromo (Hultin, 82), was the name of the group in international scholarship throughout most of the twentieth century.

Menelik II. European scholars took an interest in the language, including Karl Tutschek and Johann Ludwig Krapf, who took early steps toward making the previously unwritten language into a written one. Onesemos Nasib and his colleagues were perhaps most influential in developing Oromo literacy by teaching the Oromo, Evangelical Christianity in their own language, with the first afaan Oromoo translation of the bible (Bulcha 1995, 36-45)¹³. However, the Ethiopian government under Menelik II and the subsequent regimes did much to squelch the educational possibilities for Oromo in their native language, even going so far as to prevent studies of the Oromo population by expelling anthropologists and linguists from Ethiopian territory (Lipsky, 120). But aside from the few interested Europeans, the international community at large had a happily ambivalent stance toward the assimilation through education that Ethiopia provided its indigenous peoples.

In the twenties and early thirties of the 20th century, the Ethiopian government made advances in education that certainly were noticed by the international community. Richard Pankhurst states in his 1976 essay on the “Historical Background of Education in Ethiopia,” “[Observers] have discerned a steady rise in literacy during this period... the level of education... was ‘higher than usual’ in countries of a similar stage of evolution” (Bowen, 321). However, after centuries of repression, no one noticed the absence of Oromo language in these educational advances. In 1935 a border conflict broke out between Italian controlled Somalia and Ethiopia, which ended with the exile of Haile Selassie and a new Italian governing body.

According to J. Bowen, the Italian occupation was an enormous blow to the Ethiopian educational system. “Italian policy in Eritrea had been based since as early as 1909 on the principle of different schools for Italians and ‘subjects’” (Bowen, 321). The Italian Fascist philosophy held that as Italians, they were superior to those they had conquered, and as such, they halted the expansion of Selassie’s school system to make way for their own children. As for the spread of the “unifying” Amharic language, “the Italians, who unlike the previous Ethiopian Government, had no interest in national unity, decided from the start on rejecting any kind of national language for Ethiopia” (Bowen, 322). They even went so far in undermining Selassie’s ‘nationalistic’ intentions as to establish an edict in 1936 that “teaching should be in the main local languages of the six administrative units,” including the Oromo language in three of the six units, a geographic distribution that was actually proportional to the Oromo speaking population. Through the Italian’s indiscriminate disdain for the Ethiopian population, the Oromo nation experienced a level of linguistic and educational freedom that was unheard of under Selassie’s regime. This brief respite from Haile Selassie and Amhara governmental pressure allowed literacy in the Oromo language to grow significantly during the “relative freedom under the Italians” (Bulcha, 1997, 329).

For the Oromo, the period of Italian rule between 1935 and 1941 was one of relative equality and freedom. During this time, the Oromo as a group began to be more obviously dissatisfied with their place in Haile Selassie’s Ethiopia¹⁴. Nevertheless, in 1941 England supported Selassie’s reinstatement to the Ethiopian government. During his exile, Selassie had gained the support of the western world for his policies, which included the ever-important

¹³ Onesemos Nasib became a praised figurehead in the Oromo communities, and was greeted as a hero upon his return to his home in Ethiopia in 1904 (Bulcha 1995, 47). However, it only took until 1905 for the Amhara’s distaste for Nasib’s activities to lead to be officially accused and tried for his “heretic” and “trouble make[ing]” actions (Bulcha 1995).

¹⁴ In addition to linguistic oppression, Italy neglected to enforce the “*naftanya-gabbar* system under which the majority of the Oromo were deprived not only of their economic rights but also their social status and human dignity” (Bulcha 1997, 329). When Selassie reinstated this system upon his return, “most of the Oromo peasants and pastoralists were turned into [serfs] and their land was confiscated from them...” (Bulcha 1997, 230).

Amharization, an idea that he pursued with renewed vehemence upon his return. During the four year span from 1941 to 1945, Selassie passed several pieces of legislation that prohibited not only written, as before, but all verbal use (including education, official proceedings, and general public speech) of Afaan Oromoo. Bulcha suggests that Selassie's intensification of Amharization was in response to "an increasing sign of sporadic resistance by the Oromo against Amhara rule and the comparative linguistic freedom they had enjoyed during the Italian occupation" (Bulcha, 1995, 329). The fairly large-scale uprising of 1936 and other signs of increasing Oromo nationalism motivated Selassie's rigid restrictions on the use of afaan Oromo in education, but his attempts in fact had the opposite effect of his intention to dissolve. The shared degradation, hardship and provocation that the Oromo experienced bound them more tightly as a group than they had been in the pre-war years, if not ever.

In 1942, Haile Selassie issued a new proclamation that made Amharic "The Official language of the Ethiopian Empire" (*Negarit Gazeta* 1942, 19), which he followed with more specific regulations in the ensuing years. In 1944, Selassie issued Decree Number 3, specifically delineating the linguistic restrictions in Ethiopian education. The language of the Decree specifies that the restrictions are for Missionary educational institutions. While it may seem as though limitations on Missionary teaching would have a lesser effect on the Oromo than broader restrictions, the opposite was in fact the case. Almost exclusively, the major proponents of Oromo literacy had been missionary teachers, including Onesemos Nasib. Missionaries were the only ones who would and did teach the Oromo people *in* afaan Oromoo, so by specifically placing these restrictions on the Missionary educators, Selassie was effectively targeting Oromo education. Decree Number 3 created a Committee on Missions under the Minister of Education, which would ultimately be responsible for determining which missionary groups would be allowed to teach within the Ethiopian empire and 'approving' each group's curriculum, and specifically denied teaching opportunities to groups established during the relatively lax Italian occupation. This Committee also held the right to regulate where a group may or may not teach and to establish church teaching groups wherever the Committee 'saw appropriate need.' Meaning, possibly, the placement of an Amharic Orthodox school in an Oromo Muslim community. Most importantly, Article 13 of Decree Number 3 states that "the general language of instruction throughout Ethiopia shall be the Amharic Language, which language all missionaries will be expected to learn" (*Negarit Gazeta* 1944, 128). Article 14 then specifies that both in educational settings and in everyday interactions, local languages may only be used until the population has gained a "working knowledge of the Amharic language" (*Negarit Gazeta* 1944, 128). This Decree gave an incredible amount of power to the Ethiopian government in the control of education within its borders, and set a precedent for all educational systems to follow, all with the purpose of targeting the Oromo population. As Halldin wrote, "The missionaries' work was of mutual benefit for respective societies and the Emperor, and the missionaries can thus be characterized as the tools of the Board" (Halldin, quoted in Bulcha 1994, 99).

This limitation on education and language occurred in Ethiopia during the same period in which a huge wave of international action was directed toward preventing human rights violations in response to the horrors of the Holocaust. In fact, one of the non-derogable rights that was being passionately pursued in treaties and conventions was an individual's right to culture, just the right that Ethiopia's Amharization policy badly compromised, since afaan Oromoo was the central unifying element of the Oromo ethnic group. Incredible as it may seem,

Selassie's legislation met with approval from the international community at large¹⁵. He had a strong base of supporters in the intellectual world, one that barely diminished even until the linguistic awareness movements of the eighties and nineties. Robert Cooper brazenly affirms the merits of Amharization in the book *Language in Ethiopia* as being necessary for unification, economic development and general nationhood, and wrote with approval of the Amharization policy (Cooper, 187). Cooper and his peers believed in Selassie's argument that linguistic homogenization was an obvious and much-needed step for the good of the Empire.

When this legislation was put into practice in the late forties, the Oromo felt the oppressive force of Amharization very acutely. As opposed to the past Amharization campaigns that targeted the adult populations, this new version under Decree Number 3 of 1944 was targeted at their children. The typical grade-school classroom was made to be a small-scale version of the society at large: the authority figure, the teacher, was inevitably an Amhara, and behaved toward the Oromo children just as the police and officials behaved toward the Oromo adults. The teachers addressed Oromo children using ethnic slurs and made degrading remarks about their 'typically Oromo' lack of intelligence and potential. Many of these children spoke only afaan Oromoo when they entered into compulsory education and were forced to speak only Amharic, but were corporally and psychologically punished for mispronunciations of Amharic or lapses into afaan Oromoo. The Oromo children were told that afaan Oromoo was an inferior and uncultivated language, and were taught the Amhara prejudices against their own people, along with a skewed view of Ethiopian history (Bulcha 1994, 103). Constantly made to feel ashamed of their ethnic identity and told that they were incapable of being 'full' (or Amhara) Ethiopians, the Oromo children had an incredible attrition rate in the Ethiopian school system, and so the small percentage of Oromo who attended these schools (an estimated twelve percent of Oromo youth) grew even smaller (down to three percent) by the time the children had reached the age of 13. Balsvik reported that in the sixties, 83 percent of the children who went to school dropped out by sixth grade (Bulcha 1997, 331).

For the small percentage of Oromo children who completed high school education, the effects of this assault on their language, and therefore their identity, split them into two polarized groups as adults. For one set of Oromo, the linguistic Amharization policy had the desired effect: these people tried to shed their identity out of shame in their heritage, some even completely severing themselves from their ethnic group. These "assimilated Oromos and others spoke Amharic among themselves, taught their children only Amharic and behaved as if they were Amharas" (Bulcha 1996, 57). But although this is what the ruling Amharic claimed to desire in their public policy, the Amharic society would hardly ever allow an Amharized Oromo to be treated as though he or she were a member of the Amhara ethnic group. Knutson describes this in his essay "Dichotomization and Integration." He writes, "It will be said about him that he is not 'Galla any longer,' he likes to be 'like Amhara.' But he will nevertheless not be accepted as Amhara either by his original group or by the Amhara. He has lost part of his ethnic identity without gaining a new one" (Knutsson, 98). The Amharanized Oromo was seen as analogous to a domesticated animal, lacking the animalistic tendencies that make it threatening, but lacking as well the humanity that would make it a real friend. This person had deliberately placed himself outside of his original ethnic group without being accepted into the other. As Barth asserts, ethnic boundaries between groups persist according to the standards for identification that the group themselves generate (Barth, 15, 17). The Amhara define themselves, among other criteria, as simply non-Oromo, and as such would never be able to look upon someone known to be of

¹⁵There was some note taken early on by Lord Moyne, the chairman of the British Committee on Ethiopia, who wrote that "When we are fighting for freedom in Europe, how can we restore the Gallas and other subject races to Amharic tyranny" (Moyne, quoted in Bulcha 1994, 100). His advisement, obviously, was ignored.

Oromo heritage as a member of their group, no matter how many of their customs he or she has adopted (Lipski, 63). Because of this, the population of Amharized Oromo, unless able to completely disguise their past, were unable to live at peace with either the Oromo or the Amhara: they either were surrounded by an Oromo culture they disliked because of their psychologically damaging education, or were held in disdain by an Amharic population that they could never be a part of¹⁶. Although these people actively tried to deny their Oromoness, they were rarely effectively removed from the Oromo group, as was made evident by an outpour of Oromo nationalism from the assimilated population once the nationalism movement was underway later in the century.

The other set of pupils, which actually constituted a majority of the educated Oromo, did not allow Amharization to penetrate their psyches in the same way. Instead of being debilitated and shamed by the constant degradation they experienced during their formative years in school, they were inflamed and motivated to prove their worth as a cultural group, dichotomizing the two groups of Oromo and Amhara rather than achieving the goal of bringing them closer together through assimilation. As Bulcha states, “the dehumanizing treatment they received at school in Amharic and history classes, in addition to the status of their parents and relatives in relation to the Amhara state, its officials and the *naftanya* landlords, sowed seeds of awareness which gradually developed into a social and national (ethnic) consciousness” (Bulcha 1994, 105). The Amharization policies of the regime, specifically those implemented in education, instigated just the kind of political mobilization that they were designed to prevent. That is not to say, however, that once morally defeated, the problems inherent in the Amharization system fell away. The nature of the Oromo’s problem with the educational system inherently prevented the immediate mobilization of the Oromo people. The high attrition rates noted above are a concrete example of why it was an uphill battle; the only education available was precisely what motivated the Oromo’s discontent, and without literacy and education, it was nearly impossible to form a substantial intellectual base from which to launch a movement.

The solution to this problem came in part because of the slave trade of the 1800s. The ex-slaves that had sparked early European interest in Afaan Oromoo formed the beginning of what has been named the Oromo Diaspora, a group of Oromo intellectuals in exile from Ethiopia. These people studied the Oromo language free of the fear of persecution from the Ethiopian regime, and have made advances in linguistics and the proliferation of Oromo literary culture.

Within the borders of Ethiopia, the Oromo began to take charge of their political fate by asserting themselves as a collective will with the formation of the Matcha-Tulama Association in 1964. The Matcha-Tulama Association was the first Oromo organization that formed on a national scale, and was based in both urban and rural communities (Bulcha 1994, 105). Although it was banned by the Ethiopian government only two years after its formation, it left an important message in the Ethiopian political sphere: the Oromo were mobilizing as a political group. Simultaneously, at the University in Addis Ababa, Oromo students were beginning to challenge the dominance of the Amharic language. They would speak afaan Oromoo on campus and purposefully mispronounce words in Amharic as a provocative demonstration of the

¹⁶ One might question whether this dismissal of the Oromo ethnicity changed the composition of the Oromo as an ethnic group, as Barth suggests may happen in his discussion of the “Demographic Perspective” on ethnic groups (Barth, 20), and the question of “how, if at all, their rates are sensitive to pressures on the different niches... (Barth, 21). Certainly Amharization in the classroom constituted a formidable pressure on the Oromo that were subject to it, but those who responded in this way were a small enough percentage of the total population of Oromo people not to affect the population balance. Secondly, although these people actively tried to deny their Oromoness, they were rarely actively removed from the Oromo group, as was made evident by an outpour of Oromo nationalism from the assimilated population once the nationalism movement was underway later in the century.

linguistic freedom that they craved, and began to circulate pamphlets and magazines written in afaan Oromoo, sometimes with help from the intellectuals of the Diaspora (Bulcha 1996, 63-64).

Haile Selassie's oppressive regime was finally overthrown for good in 1974, but the Dergue (provisional government organization) that replaced it offered little of the relief from persecution that it had promised the Oromo people. For many, the situation actually became worse in a variety of ways (Debella and Kassam, 26-36). Nevertheless, the seeds of Oromo nationalism had not only been sown, but had begun to flower, and the international community began to take note of the plight of persecuted linguistic minorities. In the years that followed, international law came to incorporate specific protection for languages and linguistic groups, specifically binding in the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* and the *Minority Languages Charter* (Dunbar, 92). Ethiopia adopted a new Socialist constitution in 1994, complete with the economic and social rights that are typically emphasized by Socialist states (Renteln, 2005). This constitution includes a guarantee to human rights, including those which are upheld in the first generation of the International Bill of Rights.

The right to language that the growing Oromo nationalist movement hopes to enjoy seems an achievable goal under the constitution of 1994. Afaan Oromoo, after all, has been both responsible for their hardship, the rallying point for their modern cause, and the primary social criteria that defines the Oromo as an ethnic group, despite the diversity among them. Its prohibition throughout the majority of the twentieth century has had an irreversible impact on the Oromo group that at once made them victim to a form of cultural genocide and allowed them to realize their potential as a political and nationalistic power in Ethiopia. For its part, the Ethiopian government's preoccupation with group power and its suppression has cost it dearly; as Fisseha-Tsion states, "They have allowed power politics to continue dominating the politics while the rest of the population is suffering from famine, poverty, malnutrition and foreign dependency. The entire pride of the people has now been shattered as a result" (Fisseha-Tsion, 1988). In the end, it is difficult to tell whether an Oromia state will be created or if the rights so hopefully included in the Ethiopian constitution will be upheld, but at least it is certain that the Oromo will persist and continue to expand through education and in literature. Examining the history of Oromo education makes the importance of native language education evident, a challenge that exists around the world. This is very immediate for me; I am surrounded by the Native Hawaiian struggle in my home in the Hawaiian Islands. My hope is that each of these groups, Oromo, Hawaiian, and all others who face this important challenge, will be able to give high quality education to their children in the language of their culture.

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Jalqabdoota Bifaa fi Sagalee Qubee Afaan Oromo Barsiisaa, Waluma Faana Jechoota Uumuu

Tilahun Gamta

Waraqaan kun karaa yookin akka qubeen Afaan Oromo itti barsiifamuu danda'u hubachiisa. Barsiisaan tokko waa lama sirriitti beekuu qaba. Tokko, waan barsiisuu qajeelchee beekuu dha. Yoo waan barsiisuu sirriitti hin beekne, barattoota isaa dogoggorsa; waan dhugaa hin taane barsiisa. Waan sirrii hin taane barsiisuun ammoo balleessa guddaa dha. Lama, waan barsiisu beekuu qofa osoo hin ta'in, akka itti barsiisu beekuunis hedduu barbaachisaa dha. Eгаа, barsiisaan tokko utuu barattoota isaa fuul dura hin dhaabatin, dura waan barsiisuu fi akka itti barsiisuu sirriitti qopheeffachuu qaba.

Qubeewwan Afaan Oromo 33 dha. Mal'attoonni soddonii sadan kun ammoo sagaleewwan 33 bakka bu'u. Awuu mal'atoon tokko sagalee tokko iddoo bu'u, waan qubee akkanaatiin qubeeffame dubbisuun tasa nama hin dhibu. Mal'atoon Afaan Oromo ittiin fayyadamu, Afaan Ingiliiziitiin "phonics" jedhama. "Phonics" jechuun qubee tokko bakka sagalee tokkoo buusanii qubeessuu dha. Waan "phonics" dhaan qubeessame dubbisuunis nama hin rakkisu.

Qubeewwan Oromo 33 barsiisuu osoo hin jalqabin, waanti barsiisaan barattoota hubachiisuu qabu hedduu dha. Fakkeenyaaf, waanti qubeeffamuu isuma haasa'amu sana ta'uu isaa, awuu qubeessinu ykn awuu dubbifnu harkii fi iji keenya gara bitaatii ka'anii gara mirgaatti akka sosocho'anu faa itti himuun gaarii dha. Qubee baruun bu'aawwan ciccimoo addaa addaa akka qabu itti himuunis barbaachisaa dha. Warri dubbisuu fi qubeessuu beekanu ijaa dura qubee baraniif. Waan beeknu, waan itti amannu, waan yaadnu, waan nutti dhagayamuu waraqaa irra keenyee nama alaala jirutti erguu akka dandeenyu, dura qubee baruun dirqama.

Barsiisaan kitaabolee/qubeessota addaa addaa barattootaaf yoo dubbise, barattotni qubee baratani akkuma barsiisichaa dubbisuu danda'uu akka hawwan godha. Kitaaba/Qubeessa dubbisuufii qofa osoo hin ta'in, barsiisaan barattoota waa jechisiisee, isuma jarri dubbatan sana jara fuul duratti qubeessee, nama dubbisuu beeku alaa fidee akka inni/isheen dubbisu/dubbiftu gochuun faan barattootnii qubee baruuf onnatani akka kaka'anu godha.

Qubee baruuf kan barattoota kakaasuu danda'u sababiin biraas jira. Dhaamsi waraqaa irra kaayame amma waraqaan sun jirutti hin badu; hin irraanfatumus. Seenaan, beekumsinii fi muuxannoon Oromo caalaan isaa irraanfatumuun isaa osoo hin qubeeffamin gatii hafeef. Akka qoratamee barametti, waan dhageenye keessaa, guyyaa kudha shan booddee, harka dhibba keessaa akka harka digdamaa qofa yaadanna. Ji'a tokko booddee ammoo, yoo jabaannee jabaanne harka dhibba keessaa, harka shan qofa yaadanna. Namooti tokko tokko awuu umuriin isaanii dheerachaa deemuu ammoo isa kaleessa dhagayan har'a hin yaadatanu. Gabaabaatti, waan arginuu fi waan dhageenyu faa qubeessinee ol kaawu kan dandeenyu yoo dura qubee barre duwwaa dha.

Waan akkanaa faa itti himee, barattotnii qubee baruuf onnatani kaka'uu isaanii eega hubatee booda kan barsiisaan qubee barsiisuutti seenu. Dura qubeewwan soddonii sadanu barattoota warra fagoo taa'anutti akka mul'atanutti guguddisee qubeessuu qaba. Barattootni warri iji isaanii fagoo dhaa hin hubanne ammoo, qubeetti dhiyaatanii akka taa'anu gochuun faa irraanfatumu hin qabu.

Qubeewwan soddonii sadan bifa afuriin qopheessee dhiyeessuu ni danda'a. Bifi tokko warra dubbachiiftuu yookaan "vowels" jedhamanii mooggaafaman. Jarris kudhan:

(1) **a, aa, e, ee, i, ii, o, oo, u, uu** dha. Jarri kurdhan kun ammoo warra gabaabaa "**a, e, i, o, u**" fi warra dheeraa "**aa, ee, ii, oo, uu**" jedhamanii iddoo lamatti hiramani barsiifamu. Dubbachiiftota kurdhan kana rakkoo tokko malee qofaa isaanii jechuun nama hin rakkisu; kun kan ta'uu danda'e ammoo dubbachiiftoonni osoo hin gufatamin ykn utuu karaan itti hin cufamin laagaa keessa darbuu ijaa danda'anuuf.

Dubbachiiftuun dubbifamaa ordofuu ykn fuul dura bu'uu ni danda'a. Dubbachiiftuun awuu dubbifamaa ordofu kana fakkaata:

(2) **ab, aab, eb, eeb, ib, iib, ob, oob, ub, uub**

ac, aac, ec, eec, ic, iic, oc, ooc, uc, uuc
ach, aach, ech, eech, ich, iich, och, ooch, uch, uuch
ad, aad, ed, eed, id, iid, od, ood, ud, uud
adh, aadh, edh, eedh, idh, iidh, odh, oodh, udh, uudh
af, aaf, ef, eef, if, iif, of, oof, uf, uuf
ag, aag, eg, eeg, ig, iig, og, oog, ug, uug
ah, aah, eh, eeh, ih, iih, oh, ooh, uh, uuh
aj, aaj, ej, eej, ij, iij, oj, ooj, uj, uuj
ak, aak, ek, eek, ik, iik, ok, ook, uk, uuk
al, aal, el, eel, il, iil, ol, ool, ul, uul
am, aam, em, eem, im, iim, om, oom, um, uum
an, aan, en, een, in, iin, on, oon, un, uun
aph, aaph, eph, eeph, iph, iiph, oph, ooph, uph, uuph
aq, aaq, eq, eeq, iq, iiq, oq, oq, ooq, uq, uuq
ar, aar, er, eer, ir, iir, or, oor, ur, uur
as, aas, es, ees, is, iis, os, oos, us, uus
at, aat, et, eet, it, iit, ot, oot, ut, uut
aw, aaw, ew, eew, iw, iiw, ow, oow, uw, uuw
ax, aax, ex, eex, ix, iix, ox, oox, ux, uux
ay, aay, ey, eey, iy, iiy, oy, ooy, uy, uuy

Dubbachiiftuun dubbifamaa fuul dura bu'uu ni danda'a. Warra (4) jala jiranu ilaali. Dubbachiiftuun warra (4) jala jiranu ordofus ni danda'a:

Fakkeenyoota armaa gadii ilaali:

(1) + warra (4) jala jiranu:

a + boo = aboo
 aa + duu = aaduu
 e + da = eda
 ee + boo = eeboo
 i + fa = ifa
 ii + xa + chuu = iixachuu
 o + daa = odaa
 oo + duu = ooduu
 u + lee = ulee
 uu + muu = uumuu

Dubbachiiftuun dheeraan ykn gabaabaan jecha gidduu ni seena; alii al hiikas ni jijjira.

Fakkeenyoota armaa gadii ilaali:

dhaabuu
 dhaaluu

dhiibuu

cooruu

Hiikii jechoota armaa oliitii fi jechoota armaa gadii qofaa dha mitii?

dhabuu

dhaluu

dhibuu

coruu

Bifaa fi sagalee dubbachiiftota armaa olii eega sirriitti baranii booda, kan barattootni dubbifamtoota "consonants" baruutti darbanu.

(3) Dubbifamaa: Dubbifamtooti digdamii sadii dha. Jarris **b, c, ch, d, dh, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, ny, ph, q, r, s, sh, t, w, x, y** jedhamu. Osoo dubbachiiftuu itti hin dabalini, dubbifamaa qofaa isaa jechuun nama rakkisa. Mee osoo dubbachiiftuu dubbifamaa duuba ykn fuul dura hin buusin, " b, c, ch, d, dh, ... y" jedhaa ilaalaa. Jechuu hin dandeenye mitii? Qofaa isaa jechuun kan hin danda'mne dubbifamaan awuu laagaa keessa darbu ijaa iddoo iddootti gufatamu ykn karaan itti cufamuuf. Akkan dhagawutti, warri qubee barsiisanu, dubbifamaatti "**aa**" dabalani, "**aa, baa, caa, daa, ee, faa, gaa,... yaa**" jedhanii qubee barsiisuu jalqabu jedhu. Kana kan godhanu ijaa dubbifamaa qofaa isaa jechuu hin dandeenyeef natti fakkaata.

Ani Oromiyaa dhaqee, mana barnootaa tokko tokko keessaatti qubeen akka itti barsiifamuu utuun ilaalee, yaadi an asitti kennu waan qoratame irratti kan hundaaye ta'a ture. Ijaan kana gochuu daxxabeeff, yaadni an armaa gadiitti kennu akka karaa tokkotti ha fudhatanu jedha malee, barsiisotni karaa isa baran dhiisanii isa kana ha fudhatanu hin jedhu.

Yaadni haaraan ani kenuu fedhu lama. Tokko, dura dubbachiiftota eega barsiisanii booda, akkan armaa olitti agarsiise, jechoota dubbachiiftotaan jalqabamanu fakkeenya kennuu wayyan jedha. Lama, warri amma dubbachiiftuu dheeraa isa kana "**aa**" duwwaa dubbifamtootatti qindeessanii barsiisanu, maaliif dubbachiiftota kurdhanuu dubbifamtoota booda ykn fuul dura buusanii hin barsiifne?

Yaadi koo inni lammaffaa, inni haaraan, qubeewwan Oromo akka armaa gadiitti **(3)** fi **(1)** walitti qindeessanii barsiisuu wayya kan jedhu. Isa armaa gadii barsiisuuf yeroon dheeraan yoo ramadame wayya.

(4) ba, baa, be, bee, bi, bii, bo, boo, bu, buu

ca, caa, ce, cee, ci, cii, co, coo, cu, cuu

cha, chaa, che, chee, chi, chii, cho, choo, chu, chuu

da, daa, de, dee, di, dii, do, doo, du, duu

dha, dhaa, dhe, dhee, dhi, dhii, dho, dhoo, dhu, dhuu

fa, faa, fe, fee, fi, fii, fo, foo, fu, fuu

ga, gaa, ge, gee, gi, gii, go, goo, gu, guu

ha, haa, he, hee, hi, hii, ho, hoo, hu, huu

ja, jaa, je, jee, ji, jii, jo, joo, ju, juu

ka, kaa, ke, kee, ki, kii, ko, koo, ku, kuu

la, laa, le, lee, li, lii, lo, loo, lu, luu

ma, maa, me, mee, mi, mii, mo, moo, mu, muu

na, naa, ne, nee, ni, nii, no, noo, nu, nuu

nya, nyaa, nye, nyee, nyi, nyii, nyo, nyoo, nyu, nyuu

pha, phaa, phe, phee, phi, phii, pho, phoo, phu, phuu,

qa, qaa, qe, qee, qi, qii, qo, qoo, qu, quu

ra, raa, re, ree, ri, rii, ro, roo, ru, ruu

sa, saa, se, see, si, sii, so, soo, su, suu
 sha, shaa, she, shee, shi, shii, sho, shoo, shu, shuu
 ta, taa, te, tee, ti, tii, to, too, tu, tuu
 wa, waa, we, wee, wi, wii, wo, woo, wu, wuu
 xa, xaa, xe, xee, xi, xii, xo, xoo, xu, xuu
 ya, yaa, ye, yee, yi, yii, yo, yoo, yu, yuu

Qubeewwan akka (4) armaa oliitti eega qopheeffatee booda, lafa ijoolleen hundi qubee arguu danda'nu ijaajjee, waan akka uleettiin qubeewwanitti bububbu'aa, sagalee qubeen iddoo bu'u deddeebisee jedha. Yoo teeppii qabaate ammoo, dhiirri nii fi dubartiin qubeewwan akka teeppii irratti jedhanu eega godhee booda, teepicha dhageessisa. Isuma jedhe ykn dhageesise sana, dura ijoollee hunda jechisiisa. Asi irratti wacini fi nuffiin akka hin baay'anne of eeggachuun barbaachisaa dha. Itti aansee barattoota/ijoollee garuu **B**, garuu **C**, garuu **D** faa jedhee moggaasee, garuwwan hunda jechisiisa. San booda, amma hunda isaanii wal gawutti tokko tokkoon isaanii akka jedhanu godha. Waan tokko deddeebifnee yoo dhageenye sammuu keenyaatti qabata jedhu mitii?

Barsiisaan qubeewwan jecha uumuu danda'nutti ulee qabaa, barattootni bifaa fi sagalee baraa, waluma faana ammoo jecha uumuu akka danda'anu gochuu ni danda'a. Fakkeenyaaf, dura dubbachiiftootaan jalqabee, warra (1) fi warra (4) jala jiranutti ulee qabaa, daddafanii akka jedhanu yoo godhe barattootni jechoota akka **a + boo, aa + daa, aa + duu, a + daa, a + duu (aboo, aadaa, aaduu, adaa, aduu)** faa uumuu danda'u.

Warra (4) jala jiranu warra akka "**ba + duu, baa + duu, dha + dhaa, bu + daa, bu + luu, dha + quu, ga + nuu, nya + ra, qa + luu, so + daa + chuu, ta + kaa + luu**" faa yoo daddafanii akka jedhanu godhe jechoota akka (**baduu, baaduu, dhadhaa, budaa, buluu, dhaquu, ganuu, nyaara, qaluu, sodaachuu, takaaluu**) uumsisuu danda'a. Yoo ammoo warri (4) fi (3) jala jiranu seeraan walitti qabaman, jechoota akka **bi + shaa + n, bo + r, foo + n, ka + m, ku + n, loo + n, (bishaan, bor, foon, kam, kun, loon)** uumu.

Suuta, suuta ammoo qubeewwan hima (sentence) uumuu danda'anutti ulee qaba. Fakkeenyaaf, "**bu + na; bi + ta; ma + na; qa + ba; ta + pha; ji + ra**" yoo daddafanii jedhanii, himoota shan, jechuun, "**buna bita; buna qaba; mana jira; mana qaba; tapha jira**" uumu. Turanii turanii ammoo hima isa dheeraa armaa gadii kana faas daddafanii akka dubbisanu gochuun gaarii dha: na + moo + tii + ok + si + ji + nii, dhu + gaa + tii + fi + nya + taa, ma + lee + hin + ji + raa + ta + nu. ma + naa + fi + uf + fa + ta as + ar + ga + chu + qa + bu. (Namootii oksijinii, dhugaatii, fi nyaata malee hin jiraatanu. Manaa fi uffatas argachu qabu). Hubadhu: Jechoota tokko tokkoon lakkaawun dubbisuu miti.

Akkanaan, barattootni bifaa fi sagalee qubee qajeelchani eega baratanii booddee dha kan barsiisaan qubeessuu jalqabsiisuu. Qubeewwan hunda, jechootaa fi himoota dabalatee, ijoollummaa eegalanii sirriitti qubeessuu akka baranu gochuun dirqama barsiisaati. Jechooti nii fi himootni jarri qubeessanu ammoo warruma ofii isaaniitii uummatanu ta'uus ni danda'a. Kana gochuu gaafa danda'anu, barattootni jechi nii fi himii akka itti uumamanu baruu danda'aniiru jechuu dha.

Kana jechuun, dandeettiin barattootaa wal qixxee dha jechuu miti. Daa'imman tokko tokko dafanii lafaa ka'anii adeemu; dafanii afaan hiikkatu. Kaan kaan ammoo, eega haadhoolii fi abbootii isaanii yaaddeessanii booddee, turanii turanii adeemu; afaanis hiikkachuu eegalu. Barattootis akkanuma. Barattooti tokko tokko qubeewwan soddonii sadan yeroo gabaabaatti qulqulleeffatanii jechootaa fi himoota qubeessuu jalqabu. Warra akkanaatiif barsiisaan qubeewwan warra fuul duratti barsiifamuuf yaalaman akka baran gochuu faa qaba. Barataa fuul

durattan deema jedhuu gara duubaatti harkisuun gaarii miti. Barattootni tokko tokko yeroo dheeraa fudhatanii suuta suuta baruu. Barattooti yartuun ammo gatii rakkina afaan ingliziitiin "dyslexia or word blindness" jedhamu qabaachuu danda'nuuf, salphaatti dubbisuu baruu hin danda'nu. Barattooti akkanaa addaa addummaa qubee gidduu jiru hubachuun jara ha rakkisu malee, sammuu qaroo qabu.

Akki barsiisaan tokko barsiisu garuu, yeroo barattootni qubee baranii fixanu gabaabsuu yookaan dheeressuu ni danda'a. Barsiisaan karoora baafatee si'aan barsiisu yeroo gabaabaatti akka baranii qulqulleeffatanu godha. Inni akka itti barsiisuu fi waan barsiisuu sirriitti qopheessee barattoota fuul dura hin dhaabannee, yeroo dheeressa. Inni barattoota (keessumattuu ijoollee) dhiphisu, ifatu, naasisu, sodaachisu, arrabsuu, rukutu, yeroo dheeressuu qofa osoo hin ta'in, barattooti tokko tokko gaafachuu, waan itti fakkaate dubbachuu faa akka sodaatanu godha. Kaan kaan ammoo abdi kutatanii mana barnootaa dhufuu akka dhiisanu gochuu ni danda'a. Ijoolleen ijoollummaatti sodaachaa guddatanu ammoo fuul durattis mirga isaaniitii mormuu hin baranu ta'a.

Akkuma armaa olitti argine, jechootii dubbifamaan jalqabamanu gaaf hundumaa dubbifamaa tokko qofaan eegalamu. Warri dubbachiiftotaan jalqabamanu garuu, dubbachiiftuu gabaabaa yookaan dubbachiiftuu dheeraa dhaan jalqabamu. Armaa gaditti ammoo, dubbifamaa isa dacha'ee lama ta'ee jecha gidduu seenuu fi dubbifamaa addaa addaa lama ta'ee walitti qindaayee jecha gidduu seenu hubanna.

(a) Dubbifamtooti dacha'anii lama ta'anii jecha gidduu seenanu kudha torba. Jarris **bb, cc, dd, ff, gg, jj, kk, ll, mm, nn, qq, rr, ss, tt, ww, xx, yy** dha. Kudha torbanuu gaaf hundumaa jabaa dha; gaaf hundumaas jecha gidduu qofatti mul'atu. Dubbifamaan tokko qofni laafaa jedhama. Dubbifamaan awuu jecha gidduu seenu garuu, tokko yookiin lama ta'ee walitti aanee mul'achuu ni danda'a. Awuu tokko ta'ee jecha gidduu seenu fakkeenyaaf kana fakkaata: **gubaa, obaafachuu, rimaawuu**. Awuu dacha'ee lama ta'ee jecha gidduu seenu ammoo fakkeenyaaf kana fakkaata: **gubbaa, obbaafachuu, rimmaawuu**. Jabaachuu qofa osoo hin ta'in, dubbifamaan dacha'ee lama ta'e alii al hiikas ni jijjira.

Awuu (2) fi (4) walitti qindeessinu, dubbifamaa dacha'ee jechoota dubbachiiftotaan eegalmanu gidduu seenu uumna. Fakkeenyoota kana ilaali: ab + baa, af + fee + luu, ag + ga + achuu, ak + koo, eeb + ba, ib + boo, ob + boo, ur + raa, am + moo, (**abbaa, affeeluu, aggachuu, akkoo, eebba, ibboo, obboo, urraa**). Warra (4) fi (4) gidduu jiranutti yoo dubbifamaa isa dacha'uu danda'u daballe ammoo jechoota kana uumna: ja + b + bii, qa + c + cee, ga + d + da, re + f + faa, wa + g + gaa, ba + j + jii, to + k + ko, tuu + l + laa, ri + m + ma (**jabbi, qaccee, gadda, reffa, waggaa, bajjii, tokko, tuullaa, rimma**).

(b) Dubbifamaan addaa addaa lama ta'ee walitti qindaayee, jecha gidduu seenu hedduu dha. Inni akkanaa gaafa hundumaa laafaa dha. Warri akkanaa akka itti uumamanuu kan agarsiisuu seerri hin qoratamne. Garuu, yoo warra (2) fi (4) jala ykn warra (4) fi (4) jala jiranu gidduutti (3) daballe, dubbifamaa addaa addaa lama walitti aanee jechoota dubbifamaan eegalamanu gidduu seenu agarsiisuu ni dandeenya. Fakkeenyoota kana xiinxali: (4) + (3) + (4) bu + l + tii, cu + n + qu + r + suu, da + f + qa, du + r + ba, so + n + dii (**bultii, cunqursuu dafqa, durba, sondii**) uumna. Awuu (2) fi (4) walitti qindeessinu ammo jechoota dubbachiiftuun eegalamanu warra akka ar + ba, ar + ma, ar + ka, il + ma, or + ma (**arba, arma, arka, ilma, orma**) faa uumna. Awuu warra (2) fi (4) gidduu jiranutti (3) daballu, jecha isa akka ur + gee + f + fa + chuu (**urgeeffachuu**) faa uumna. **Hubadhu**: Dubbifamaan sadii walitti aanee jecha gidduu hin seenu! Fakkeenyaaf, **harkka** miti; **harka** malee.

(c) Dubbifamtooti jaha hin dachaafamanu. Jarris: **ch, dh, h, ny, ph, sh** dha. Yoo dubbachiiftuun jara ordofe, **ch** nii fi **ny** ni jabaatu. **shn** gara caalu laafaa dha. Warri hafan, jechuun, **dh** nii fi **phn** jabaachuus laafuus ni danda'u. Akka itti jabaatanu kan agarsiisanu mal'atootni addaa addaa jiru. Garuu, amma har'aatti kana wayya jennee hundi keenya walii gallee kan filatne hin jiru.

D. Dubbifamaan hudhaa jedhamus jira. Mal'atootni isaa " ' " kana fakkaata. Akkan amma yaaduutti hudhaan " ' " iddoo **h** yookaan iddoo **dh** bu'a. Fakkeenyoota kana hubadhu:

hoolaa ykn 'oolaa
hooduu ykn 'ooduu
hardha ykn har'a
baldhaa ykn bal'aa

Warra (a), (b), (c), (d), lakkofsota (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) fi qubeewwan gurguddoo (A, B, C, D...Y) ol kaayanii eger barsiisuu wayya jedheen yaada. Garuu, murtiin kan barsiisaati.

Barattootii qubeewwan soddonii sadan kana sirriitti baruu fi dhiisuu isaanii xiinxaluuf jecha, gaaffilee addaa addaa gaafachuun barbaachisaa dha. Gaaffilee addaa addaa barsiisaan tokko gaafachuu danda'u hundaa fi akka itti gaafatu asi irratti qubeessuun hin danda'amu. Fakkeenyaaf, barattooti iddoo duwwaatti qubee isa barbaachisaa ta'e guutanii jechootaa fi himoota akka uumanu gochuun karaa tokko. Fakkeenyoota armaa gaditti kennaman ilaali:

Iddoo duwwaatti dubbifamaa guutii jechoota uumi:

- a) a ... a (deebii: akka, ala, amma, ana, aqa, arba, arka, arma, ...)
- b) aa...aa (deebii: aadaa, aagaa, aajaa, aamaa, aanaa, aaraa, aasaa...)

Iddoo duwwaatti duubbachiiftuu guutii jechoota uumii:

- a) b ...nuu (deebii: banuu, boonuu ...)
- b) q...uu (deebii: qaaruu, qaruu, qooruu, qoruu...)

Xumura

Ijoolleen dandeettii dhaan addaa addaa ijaa ta'aniif, karaan ittiin baruu danda'anus addaa addaa ta'un ni mala. Tokko tokko fakkeenyoota hedduu xiinxalanii, ofuma isaaniitiin seera afaanii hubatu. Tokko tokko ammoo darbee darbee seerri afaanii eega itti himamee booda, fakkeenyootti hedduun akka kennamanuuf fedhu. Barsiisaan tokko akka itti barsiisuu, jechuun karaa isaa fi barattoota isaatii mijaawuu filachuuf mirga qaba jedheen yaada. Barsiisoti karaa kamiyyuu haa barsiisanu kaayyoon, qubeewwan soddonii sadan kana barattootii/ijoolleen yeroo gabaabaatti qulqulleefatanii baranii, dubbisuu fi qubeessuu akka danda'anu gochuu dha. Kana goonaan, sabni Oromo doofummaa keessaa bayee, saba dubbisuu fi qubeessuu beeku ta'ee, dubbisuu fi qubeessuu aadaa isaa godhatee dhalootaa fi dhalootatti dabarfata jedheen yada.

Inni qubee bare haa barsiisuu; inni hin barin ammoo haa baratu!

A Critical Reflection on Ethiopia's Human Rights Predicament: A Gender-Based Perspective on the Somali Region in Ethiopia

Fowsia Abdulkadir

Abstract

Most of today's human rights violations take place within sovereign states, human rights abuses in the Somali region of Ethiopia, also known as Ogaden are certainly not an exception. The root causes of these human rights violations, among other things, can be attributed to the protracted ethnic conflicts that afflict Ethiopia. Although Ethiopia's new constitution, in its written form, adheres to fundamental human rights principles and is impressively comprehensive and explicit, in practice, the Ethiopian government violates the very constitution it developedⁱ.

In addition, studies have shown that women and girls suffer disproportionately in conflict situations, in other words, the way that men and women experience these conflicts are poles apart and their different roles and capacities must be recognized, considered and built upon in the wider context of human development strategies. Further, while women endure the same trauma as the rest of the population, they are often targets of specific forms of violence. Thus, linking gender with conflict/crises and conflict resolution is the central connection between adhering to fundamental human rights principles and implementing these principles for governments in developing nations. More specifically, it is important to recognize that efforts to resolve conflicts and addressing their root causes will not succeed unless women play a full and equal part in building the foundation of enduring peace, which is crucial to the development of just society that embraces good governance, and upholds human rightsⁱⁱ.

Nonetheless, the women from the Somali region in Ethiopia have not been included in any of the attempts that were made to resolve the ethnic conflicts in this region. This paper will analyse the human rights situation in the Somali region through the lenses of gender-based analyses. The analysis in this paper will highlight the vital role women can play in attaining a lasting peace in the region, while underlining the absence of women's movements from all the attempts that were made in this region.

Human Rights and Africa

The purpose of this paper is to initiate a thought provoking analysis on and around the notion of human rights within the context of Africa, and particularly when considering human rights issues in the Horn of Africa. Human rights discourse needs to be re-conceptualized with regards to the continent of Africa. According to I. G. Shivji, (1998) this re-conceptualising is essential because: a) human rights discourse is backward in so far as it is entrenched in colonial era thinking, and b) this discourse is not ideologically neutral; yet for the people of Africa human rights struggles sum-up their daily lives.

"Cultural relativism" permeates some levels of the debate on human rights, and whether as 'Western' concepts, these might not necessarily work in Africa. Moreover, another level of the debate relates to the validity and applicability of the concepts of human rights. Shivji (1989) argues that human rights concepts have universal validity and applicability, which I happen to agree with and believe. Furthermore, Shivji states:

“To the extent the Western model of the state has spread to other parts of the world, the factors which gave rise to the need for constitutional guarantees and led to the evolution of the philosophy of human rights in the West become equally relevant in other parts of the world. (Kannyo quoted by Shivji, 1989:11)”

So, establishing the fact that human rights concepts do apply and need to be adhered to in Africa and elsewhere in the world, lead us to the realization that it is important to be critical, in not only establishing whether or not these concepts are applied, but also, about how they are applied, how they are defined as well as who defines them. For human rights concept to become relevant, these concepts need to be rooted in the real context of Africa with its complex historical legacies of colonialism.

According to Okoth Ogendo as cited by Shivji there ought to be a minimum content of human rights that should include but not be limited to:

*“Life in the biological sense;
Liberty including the security of the person or group;
Freedom of conscience, expression, assembly and association;
Freedom from discrimination;
Self-determination” (Shivji, 1989:11).*

Human Rights Discourse is Backwards

Shivji argues that the dominant discourse on Africa and human rights fails to contextualize human rights ideology within the imperialist domination of Africa. For instance, in the human rights literature, we see frequent references to Bokassa and Amin as cruel perpetrators of human rights violations; but we never see critical reflections on the fact that Bokassa was France’s protégé and we hardly come across any critical analysis around the question of who installed Amin into power, in the first placeⁱⁱⁱ. In addition to lacking critically relevant analysis of how certain leaders of Africa, who are notoriously known for committing human rights violations, came into power, the human rights discourse is backward because it does not take into account the continents context in terms of what is needed for the people of the continent.

For illustrations, in the context of the bourgeois ear, the ‘right to private property’ was central to the discourse of rights; taking priority over other rights. In present day Africa, the ‘right to self-determination’ and the ‘right to organize’ must be placed as central rights^{iv}. It is important to emphasize that, the right to self-determination continues to be valid even after the people have chosen some form of government. In other words, it is a right that needs to be continuously central as the people of any given society pursue their right for good governance. Equally important is the right to organize, the right to organize is essential in present day Africa; in revitalizing the capacity of the people for positive social change^v.

I would like to focus on the case of the Horn of Africa, particularly taking a glimpse at Ethiopia’s poor human rights record. I would like to underline the words ‘taking a glimpse’, because as many historian scholars have written about the plight of the different people of Ethiopia, this short paper can not capture all the accounts of human rights violations that have been recorded and documented by organizations such as Oromo Studies Association, Ogaden Human Rights Committee and Sideman Concern. As we are all aware, most human rights violations in the world occur within states that have signed the covenants of human rights, Ethiopia is one good example.

Human rights violations are body counts, torture practices, an endless list of horrors, these violations seem beyond comprehension, madmen acting without reason. And moreover, D. Matas posits that “*the reports seem to be written by someone with the stomach of a physician and the mind of a statistician*” (David Matas, 1994:3). The poignant relevance of this author’s point to the human rights situation in Ethiopia is not lost. Conferences such as the Oromo Studies Association conference afford us the opportunity to critically analyse, discuss, debate and find lasting solutions to this poor human rights record by the Ethiopian government. The suffering of the people of Ethiopia in the hands of autocratic and dictatorial regimes is well documented and it is high time it stopped. And it is indeed the sufferings of these people that necessitate conferences like this to be held, so that a dialogue or dialogues can be had with regards to where to go from here.

Human rights violations and their discursive terms are not ideologically neutral. According to Matas (1994), human rights violations occur for a purpose; these acts do not take place in an ideological vacuum. Human rights violations in the Horn of Africa and elsewhere are acts that represent manifestations of ideology. Matas further argues that, human rights violations are done on purpose, and at times can be the consequence of an ideology^{vi}. For instance, in Hitler’s Germany, the ideology of racism took a totalitarian form.

Most of us wonder, what leads to acts of human rights violation. In an attempt to analyse the root causes of human rights violations, David Matas, looks at four ideologies as example causes of human rights violations; and these are: “*The national security state; religion; communism; and apartheid*”. I would extend Matas analysis to include Colonialism as one of the ideologies that can be factored as a root cause of human rights violations. The ideology of colonialism is wrong in so many levels; there is not enough space in this paper to get into an in-depth analysis of such an ideology. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that the people of Africa have been subjected to cruel and gross human rights violations through colonialism.

A Critical Glance at the Current Regime in Ethiopia

The Somali region which is the focus of my analysis, is the most Eastern region in Ethiopia, it lies between Oromia to the West, Afar land to the Northeast, the Republic of Djibouti to the North, Kenya to the South, and the Somali Republic to the East^{vii}. There is a complex history to this region, and it is recorded and accounted for in a number of documents. This complex chain of historical events has contributed and led to the current state of conflict in Ethiopia, particularly in the Somali region. The Somali region was integrated into what was then the Abyssinian Empire at the end of the 19th century. This well-known historical fact took place at the initial stages of European colonization of the continent of Africa. The fact that the Somali region was awarded, by the British, to the then Ethiopian Emperor, Menelik, highlights another important historical fact, that Abyssinia – now Ethiopia, was a player in the powerful game of scramble for Africa in the Horn. These historical facts are well articulated by authors such as Louis FitzGibbon, M. H. Khalif, and M. Doornbos (2002), who provide in their article “*The Somali Region: A Neglected Human Rights Tragedy*”, an essential synopsis of the region’s historical trajectory, which I would recommend for anyone interested in more historical information.

The one thing common to all the various regimes of Ethiopia had been the fact that they have brutally exploited the people and violated every aspect of fundamental human rights principles. For instance, at the time of the Monarchy, traditionally, exploitation and oppression were institutionalized attributes of Ethiopia’s feudal society, being entrenched in the customs and laws, which administered relation between the ruling nobility and the mass of serfs. Based on

this tradition, the Ethiopian socio-political establishments were devoid of basic human rights considerations^{viii}.

Then in 1974, the Dergue regime of Mengistu H. Miriam came to power, after a long struggle and resistance to the human rights violations of King Haile Selassie's regime. The human rights record of the Dergue was so atrocious that even the unwilling had to acknowledge its existence, it surpassed its predecessor's record. The cries of the different peoples of Ethiopia have fell onto deaf ears, as far as the international community is concerned. Torture, disappearances and random detention marked the gory and unstable period known as the Red Terror during which several thousand civilians were massacred.

In 1991, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) came to power, re-writing the constitution, they brought with them economic liberalization, multi-party structure, and endorsed the existence of freedom of the press – only on paper. Chapter three of the new Ethiopian constitution adheres to fundamental human rights principles, this new Ethiopian constitution is notably comprehensive and human rights provisions are clearly stated.

However, the EPRDF went down the path its predecessors have gone, which is a path covered in gross human rights violations and marks the brutal suffering of the people of Ethiopia on the hands of their government. To the disappointment of the international community and many Ethiopians, international human rights organizations reported continuous violations of basic constitutional rights that this regime had written and vowed to protect^{ix}.

Human rights violations, by the current Ethiopian regime, have been widely publicized. As quoted by Khalif and Doornbos, *The Economist* shockingly reported huge gaps between Ethiopia's written policy position on human rights and its practice:

“In the Oromia and Somali regions, the parties that had established strong local identities by fighting the Mengistu regime, such as the Oromo Liberation Front and Ogaden National Liberation Front, have been suppressed as ‘terrorists’. Indeed, both these parties grew out of guerrilla movements. But the government also accuses the All Amhara People's Organization and Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Coalition of waging war, without producing much evidence that these parties use or advocate violence. People unwilling to join EPRDF, let alone those known to favour secession, are described as ‘narrow nationalists’. They are often imprisoned and their meetings banned. In Oromia and Somali regions, human rights groups have documented hundreds of disappearances”. (Khalif & Doornbos, 2002:76)

According to *the Washington Post* (April 13th, 1998), the current Ethiopian regime had arrested and kept in detention more journalists, in the three-period of 1995 to 1998, than any other government in the continent of Africa. The people of the Somali region and many other regions of Ethiopia have witnessed and suffered more than their share of violent aggressions by the state machinery. Women from the Somali region have recounted horror stories of how women deliver babies at home because it was/is not safe to go the hospital. It is challenging enough to have to walk for miles to get to any type of health care facility for these women, but it is even more dangerous for them to go to these so called hospital facilities because the military decides when to turn-off the power, and they had shut the power off while some women were having babies. So now, these women risk their lives by delivering their babies at home with traditional midwives.

Gender-Based Analysis on the Plight of Somalis in Ethiopia

As I attempted to do this research, I kept thinking about the plight of Somalis and particularly the women in this region. In an effort to situate the women of this region along the continuum of conflict/crisis, and peace negotiations, it is clear that these women always bore the brunt of all the state sponsored violence. It is a known fact that women and girls suffer disproportionately in armed conflict situations; and in addition, women and girls are always targets of specific forms of violence.

‘Violence against women and girls’^x has been recognized as severe human rights violation because of the wide range of rights it violates at the same time^{xi}. In an armed conflict situation, the lack of stability inevitably leads to the escalation of all kinds of violence especially rape and other forms of sexual violence against women. The Somali region in Ethiopia is one of the most heavily militarized regions in the Horn of Africa. Because of the long-standing ethnic based conflict, this region barely had a stable period which can be portrayed as violence free. Generally, in conflict situations, violence against women is often times used as a weapon of war, for the purposes of persecuting the community that is deemed “the enemy”. In the case of the Somali region, most of the residents of that region have been accused of collaborating with the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF); and have been subjected to arbitrary detentions, disappearances, killings and rape. The perpetrators of such violence against unarmed civilian women in this region are government forces. Although the underlying factors of violence against women are inherent in discriminations which deny women equality with men, often times these acts of violence are pushed by discriminations but also further perpetuate gender-based discriminations.

The plight of women in the Somali region of Ethiopia is so brutal that it is heart breaking to find out that they are forgotten by the international community. This paper is indeed an attempt to provide these women with some voice, maybe by writing about them and raising their issues in conferences such as this, will eventually get them heard. Women and girls from this region are jailed, tortured, raped and harassed on a daily basis by government military personnel. They have no access to basic health care and education. They live in constant fear, fear of being accused of something that will land them in jail, where they are raped by soldiers. One of the horror stories that women go through, for instance, is a woman will be jailed with no proper trail and then raped by the guards of the jail, then will be released and told that she now can not leave the village, because they don’t want these kinds of stories to be widely known. So, for instance, then that woman who could be sick, won’t be allowed to go the nearest city with a hospital facility, she could become pregnant, if she does become pregnant, then she will be ousted by other community members, because she is no longer a virgin, and she still won’t be allowed to leave the village. These women not only live in fear, but they bear children, raise their children in the middle of ethnic-conflict, watch their children grow-up in this conflict situation and eventually either get killed or kill to survive.

I would argue that linking gender-based analysis with conflict/crisis and conflict resolution process is the central connection between adhering to fundamental human rights principles and implementing these principles for governments in the Horn of Africa. Efforts to address the root causes of conflicts in the Horn of Africa, particularly in Ethiopia, will not succeed unless women play a full and equal part in building the foundations of enduring peace. There is a vital role which could be played by women in peace processes for this region. However, women from the Somali region in Ethiopia have been excluded from all the attempts that were made in resolving this protracted ethnic based conflict in Ethiopia. This act of excluding women negates all the

evidence from the literature on the gender dimensions along the continuum of conflict, peace negotiations, peacemaking, peacekeeping and reconstruction.

Black Feminist Thought

Gender-based analysis, Black Feminist Thought and Feminist Intersectional Theory are all relevant frames of analysis when reflecting on the plight of the women of the Somali region of Ethiopia. Black feminist thought in a trans-national context would provide an appropriate frame of analysis. Black feminist thought lies within the context of critical social theory in its commitment to justice for all oppressed groups. Moreover, as an approach Black feminist thought provides particular kind of knowledge that is gained from the intersecting oppressions of race, class, gender and nationality^{xii}. I would argue that extending this frame of analysis to the intersecting oppressions of gender and ethnicity could prove to be useful in the context of this region. There could be tremendous knowledge which can be gained from such analysis with regards to the plight of women of this region.

To conclude I would recommend that there is a need for genuine efforts to reach out to the women of this region. Evidence abounds in the literature that, lasting peace will not be attained if women are not participating in these processes. In addition, all the basic steps to “gender-dimensions of reconstruction” are essential to be appropriately covered. These include:

- Interventions focussing on women’s needs.
- Gender-based approach to programming which consciously includes women and attempt to eliminate all gender related barriers.
- Put into practice “substantive” gender-equity strategies^{xiii}

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- ^{iv} I. G. Shivji, (1998) “The Concept of Human Rights In Africa”; Codesria Book Series; London
- ^v *ibid*
- ^{vi} *ibid*
- ^{vii} History Centre; <http://ogaden.com/History.htm>
- ^{viii} Khalif & Doornbos
- ^{ix} M. H. Khalif & M. Doornbos, (2002) “The Somali Region in Ethiopia: A Neglected Human Rights”, in Review of African Political Economy. No. 91: 73-94; ROAPE Publications Ltd.
- ^x “According to Article 1 of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, “the term ‘violence against women’ means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”. Furthermore, in Article 2, the Declaration stipulates that “violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following:

- (a) Physical , sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;
- (b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution
- (c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the state, wherever it occurs.”

^{xi} Amnesty International (Oct. 2004); AI Index: IOR 52/004/2004

^{xii} Collins, Patricia Hill. (2002); “Black Feminist Thought: knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment”, Routledge, New York.

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Women's Rights and Women's Health During HIV/AIDS Epidemics: The Case of Oromo Women

Begna Dugassa

Abstract

Twenty-five years passed since HIV/AIDS has been recognized as a major public health problem. Although billions of dollars have been spent in research and development we still have no medical cure or vaccination for this deadly epidemic. In the early days of the epidemic, public health slogan suggested that HIV/AIDS does not discriminate; now it is becoming clear that it affects women, the marginalized, colonized and disempowered groups of people more than others. HIV/AIDS epidemic is exacerbated by the social, economic, political and cultural conditions of societies such gender, racial, class and other forms of inequalities. The global pandemic of HIV/AIDS demands the need to travel extra miles and go beyond the biomedical model and the traditional public health education tools and come up with new ideas and strategic thinking to contain the epidemic. In this paper, I will argue that containing the epidemic requires giving appropriate attention to the social illness of gender, race, class inequalities that are responsible for exacerbating biological disorders. This means one of the solutions will be containing social ills.

Introduction

HIV/AIDS is one of the deadliest epidemics that human beings have ever experienced. HIV/AIDS is incurable and fatal disease. Although life-prolonging treatment is accessible for few, we are still far away for developing medical cure or vaccine. In the past, empire builders used epidemics for military purposes to clear the lands they needed and wipe out several indigenous people. HIV/AIDS, is one of the deadly epidemics that human beings have ever experienced, hence, there is the potential that the dominant groups to deliberately neglect HIV/AIDS to silence those who resist colonialism, subjugation and struggle for empowerment and self-determination. The effort to contain the HIV/AIDS epidemic should go along with the struggle for human rights and empowerment.

Historical analyses into public health reveal that public health usually began as a social movement (Watts, 1997). Ever since its inception, public health principles have been interwoven with human rights, democracy, freedom and social justice. Although the relationships between social justice and public health are well-established, dominant groups who benefit from the subordination of women and certain racial groups generally ignore the impact of injustices they commit. They are reluctant to recognize and accept these realities. For example, the Ethiopian government explains the HIV/AIDS epidemic exclusively in terms of sexual behavior.

The first cases of AIDS were reported in the United States in 1981. In the early eighties, HIV/AIDS was associated with homosexuality a relatively wealthy, educated and mobile group of people (Bayer and Kirp, 1992). In the 2000s, the face of this disease has changed and now it is associated with women, the poor, racial minorities and marginalized groups of people (Farmer, 1999). Race, gender and class disparities in the rate of HIV/AIDS infection are not simple accidents that societies cannot control. They are the result of social constructs, which can be adjusted by reconstruction.

In rich countries, HIV patients have access to anti-retroviral drugs that help reduce the pool of HIV virus in the blood and extend life compared to poor countries. Those countries,

which can provide anti-retroviral drugs and reduce the pool of the HIV virus, will cut the risk of infection in healthy person (Barnett and Whiteside, 2002). This means, to contain the disease, there is a need to look at the HIV/AIDS epidemic beyond the so-called deviant sexual behavior; for poor women who are involved in commercial sex, sexual behavior is not about sexual pleasure but it is a means of survival. From my previous work (Dugassa, 2006, Dugassa, 2003) it is clear that most Oromo women, who live in extreme poverty, are denied educational opportunities, basic human necessities and the rights to security. The rights of Oromo women to have stable families are also violated. For example, when husbands are involuntarily recruited to the war fronts, the women will permanently lose their partners. When they lose their husbands, the family income will drop significantly. This situation will force them to get involved in commercial sex that put them at risk of HIV/AIDS. Their involvement in the sex trade is a way of earning income necessary for the survival of the family. For these women, this dishonoring sexual activity is dictated by social problems created by the Ethiopian government's social policies (Dugassa, 2003). To contain the HIV/AIDS epidemic is an economically viable and socially acceptable measure that is a good preventive tool.

In the first part of this paper, I will examine the concept of health and then discuss the social construction of public health problems and give backgrounds for the issues under discussion. In the second part, I will discuss the relationships between HIV/AIDS epidemic and human rights violations, emphasizing the problem of women in particular. In the third part, I will examine the roots of HIV/AIDS transmission, and particularly examine the challenges that women face; the nature women's biology and social and cultural realities and the roles these conditions play in the transmission of the HIV virus.

Social Construction of Health and Disease

As security and safety are socially constructed, the risk of diseases and epidemics are also socially produced phenomena. All forms of discrimination reinforce social inequalities. Social inequalities play a role in the social well being of individuals or groups. As discussed above, the face of HIV/AIDS has changed from what we knew in the 1980s to the present. Such a change suggests that the epidemic is exacerbated by the social and political defects bound in the affected communities. The epidemic is indicative of massive socio-economic and political disturbances among the marginalized.

Different disciplines have different understandings of the concept of health. In this paper, I follow the definition given by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2002). WHO defines "health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." When the concept of health is understood this way by implication all forms of discriminations have an affect on the social wellbeing of people. For example, one of the covenants of human rights states, "the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being" (ICSECR, 1966)." That is why currently public health is working with a concept that portrays health as a part of everyday living and includes essential dimensions to the quality of life. This view of health recognizes freedom of choice and emphasizes that human rights violations create pathogenic social conditions for healthy individuals and communities. Those who are most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS are the marginalized groups and individuals. To achieve "the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health" malign social conditions must be prevented. The question that should be raised at this point is are the conditions necessary for "enjoyment of the highest attainable states of health"; who should create or provide these healthy conditions; if everyone is entitled to create

their own conditions, what are the obstacles for those who cannot create such conditions? To be more specific, I offer the case of Oromo women for discussion. What are the conditions that put the Oromo women at risk of HIV/AIDS and how can they create conditions that would reduce these risks? All these boil down to the question of human rights.

Social Construction of Public Health Problems

If disease is an expression of an individual life under unfavorable conditions, then epidemics must be indicative of mass disturbances of mass life (Virchow, 1848). Virchow is considered to be one of the fathers of public health and he suggested that epidemics are the result of social ills and disturbances for which he offered as the solution social justice, democracy and stability. He came up with this conclusion after he investigated the causes of the typhus epidemic in Upper Silesia, an area inhabited mainly by Polish people but ruled by Germany. Virchow's finding suggested that, the epidemic resulted from the social, economic and political ills, which the Polish people in Upper Silesia experienced at that time. He further elaborated that it was the social condition that produced and then exacerbated the disease. The finding was one of the first to establish the pathogenic effect of uncontested and unfair power relations between the dominant and the dominated. This understanding does not limit the pathogenic effect of power on race or national affairs but also includes the power relations between class and gender.

Freedom of one kind helps the realization of freedom of other kind (Sen,1999). Sen's statement suggests that if a person or a group enjoys freedom, they have a better opportunity to choose in life. By having a better opportunity to choose in life, they can avoid conditions that put them at risk and are more likely be free from several disease causing conditions.

The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house (Lorde, 1984). Lorde, a feminist scholar who argues that to be free from oppression and exploitation one cannot use the institutions, worldviews and knowledge of those who subordinate and oppress. As in many other disciplines health professionals and policy makers reinforce conventional systemic discrimination based on gender and race. By design, neglect or ignorance, health policies, programs and practices are implicated in the health of the marginalized. In many societies, discrimination falls largely on women, racial minorities and the working classes. This necessitates that women should interrogate the dominant system that invalidates women's view and compromises their needs. These three authors clearly suggest that individuals and groups cannot achieve their desired goals or live up to their potentials if their rights are violated.

Absence and presence of human rights are important indicators of social wellbeing. Historical analyses in public health reveal that diseases that appear to threaten dominant groups directly or indirectly attract political and economic support, which is essential to control and contain these diseases. However, diseases that are more common in subordinated groups get no such support and attract little intervention. Articulating women's rights is important in cutting down the transmission rate of the HIV virus and slowing the speed at which patients die and helps them to have a better quality of life.

Mann et al. (1999) are the first health professionals who explicitly linked human rights discourse and health. According to these authors, the objective of bringing health and human rights together is to improve human well-being beyond what could be achieved through either health promotion or human rights-based approaches. Combining the two principles would have synergetic health effects. According to these authors, the first duty of public health is to collect data, assess the health problem and then interpret. The second duty is to develop social policies to tackle the problem at the starting point or control or contain it by setting priority social

agendas. The third objective is evaluating the implementation of the social policies and social goals. To fulfill each of these duties and its responsibilities there must be checks and balances in society. If there were no regard for human rights all these duties could be compromised at all levels and health problems would attract little or no attention. For instance, anti-colonial and anti-racist literatures suggest that colonizers and slaveholders compromised the health need of colonized people and slaves for two main reasons. First, they wanted to maximize the human and natural resource exploitation. Second, they did not understand the health needs of the colonized and enslaved people. Although gender relations are different from colonial or slave and master relations, male domination is definitely implicated in women's health problems.

It has been clearly established that research agendas and research questions are asked from the perspective of the researchers and funding institutions. Male dominated research made diseases that are more prevalent and serious among women and racial minorities, were usually under funded and less researched. For example, according to Iacopino and Rasekh (1998), for over two decades armed conflict brought devastation to the education and health structures in Afghanistan. After the Taliban took control of Afghanistan, the government banned women and girls from attending schools. Afghanistan women were not allowed to see male doctors. Given that girls are not allowed attending school there are no women health professionals. This left many women to die from simple and curable diseases. Another example is the case of sickle cell anemia. Until the 1960s sickle cell anemia, which affects people of African and Asian descent, was one of the diseases that were under researched. This is because of the social and economic status of African-Americans was low and they were not politically powerful. In addition, due to their social status, African-Americans were under represented among researchers and academics. Thus, the health needs of African-Americans were compromised.

Epidemic as Waves of Violence

When we think about women's health as human rights, we need to ask the following questions. What are the conditions that put women at risk? What are the health problems that are more common or more serious in women that have received enough social and scientific investigations? How are the social policies constructed and who constructed them? We also need to ask whether or not male dominated institutions and epistemologies have discounted the needs of women. If the answer (s) to any of the questions suggest that women's experiences are different from what they reality are, there is a need to ask another question. How can we change the situation? How can women who were for generations disempowered bring about the necessary changes in their lives and to the social realities in which they live? The possible answers to these questions have some thing to do with the rights of women to have choices in life and to make sure anything that is contrary to their experiences is challenged.

Public health problems are not simply the result of biological agents. Biological agents such as HIV require the right social conditions that are necessary for its propagation. Social conditions can either limit or cause the propagation of the biological agents to result to epidemics and these conditions are not the result of accident. As such, epidemics result from several waves of mass disturbances that are durable or chronic and acute or short term. These waves of chronic and acute, disturbances include human rights violations, colonial structural violence, denial of leadership, war, instability, poverty and illiteracy. From women's perspective, the wave of disturbances includes male social, economic and ideological domination.

HIV/AIDS Epidemics and Women

The number of women with HIV/AIDS has been increasing steadily worldwide. Women suffer from the same complications of AIDS that affect men, but they also suffer gender-specific manifestations of the disease, such as recurrent vaginal yeast infections and severe pelvic inflammatory diseases, which increase their risk of cervical cancer. Women also exhibit different characteristics from men for many of the same complications of antiretroviral therapy, such as metabolic abnormalities.

When it comes to HIV/AIDS, sub-Saharan Africa is the region that has been affected the most. The number of female and male HIV/AIDS patients is 57% and 43%, respectively, (UNAIDS, 2004). In Ethiopia, the percentage is 55% to 45%, respectively. To understand why the number of female HIV/AIDS patients are greater than the number of males we need to closely look at what has been contributing to such differences. If we establish the conditions that have contributed to these male-female differences in the HIV/AIDS patient population, we can develop the means to tackle the problem. The higher the number of HIV/AIDS patient population suggests there are too many illiterate, hungry, disempowered and desperate women in the world. HIV/AIDS is one of the problems added on the top of many other problems. This did not happen by accident. Unless this is challenged it will be very difficult to contain the HIV/AIDS.

In many societies there is male domination. What are the health impacts of such domination? It is well established that HIV virus causes AIDS. The geographical spread, individuals' susceptibility to it suggests that social conditions such as income, diets and other living conditions help to determine the risks. The biomedical model of addressing HIV/AIDS epidemic, such as developing a drug cure or a vaccine are important, yet, we are still too far from reaching the desired goal. Public health education promoting abstinence or avoiding unprotected sex are essential tools to contain the epidemic. However, the relationship between HIV and the disease is not simple causal. These conditions demand that we need to look for more comprehensive solutions.

For the discrepancy between men and women in the number of HIV/AIDS patients, three different possible explanations are suggested. The first explanation is biological conditions. According to this theory, women's bodies have more mucosal surfaces than men's bodies. In unprotected sex, this condition exposes women more to the HIV virus than it does men. The second explanation is socio-economic conditions, an area where women have very little power. The third is socio-cultural gender norms, norms which societies have constructed in the past and which silence the voice of women and deny them participation in the daily affairs of the community.

The risk of acquiring HIV/AIDS depends on two major conditions. The first one is a lack of knowledge of how the virus is transmitted. The second one is freedom to make choices in life. Poverty is one of the limiting factors in freedom to know and freedom to choose in life. In turn, shifts in ownership are linked to shifts in power relations. For many women, violations of women's rights eroded their power over their ability to own property and decide on their own affairs.

One of the first well-known public health interventions of 1854 occurred when John Snow tracked the source of an outbreak of cholera in London to a water pump in Broad Street. Closing the public pump brought the outbreak under control. During the HIV/AIDS, for which we have no cure or vaccination yet a regard for human rights and ensuring that everyone has access to basic necessities in life are instrumental in containing the disease.

Roots of HIV/AIDS Transmissions

Since the number of women with HIV/AIDS is greater than men, to provide a comprehensive solution we need to closely look at conditions that put women at risk in transmission or what increases their vulnerability. Once we understood how vulnerability and risks are constructed we can then analyze them and engage in discussion about ways of changing these conditions.

There are four major roots that are known for transmissions of HIV virus. The first root is in unprotected sexual contacts, when sexual fluids that contain HIV virus are permitted to pass from the infected person to a healthy one. In the second one, the virus is transmitted from the infected mother to her child during pregnancy and in breast-feeding. The third root is needle exchange during drug injection among drug addicts and the usage of unsanitized needle in the clinic. The last one is through blood transfusion. These transmission routes are stipulated by the biological, social, economic, cultural and environmental realities of women.

From the perspective of human rights, sexual relations could be sex for pleasure (a love affair) which is between two partners with equal power relations. The second one is sex for trade (sex for survival), which results from the denial of opportunities in life. The third one is sex as violence (rape) that is a violation of the right to security and safety. The risk of transmission for HIV is higher in the second and third cases of sexual relations. These conditions could be avoided or stopped if the rights of women were respected. For example, women are at a higher risk than men for HIV infections. Studies have shown that women who have been infected with viruses that cause ulcerations of the vagina such as genital herpes, syphilis, and chancroid are at increased risk of becoming infected with HIV. It is also known that the risk of infection with HIV is further increased by a history of childhood sexual abuses.

The other important reason to consider women's rights as a tool to contain HIV/AIDS is that once women are infected, there is a chance of transmitting the virus to her sexual partner or to her unborn and breast-fed children. The transmission of HIV/AIDS from mother to child occurs during pregnancy or in breast-feeding. The risks of HIV positive men infecting his children are low. The pathways by which HIV positive men can infect their children are via infecting the pregnant and breast-feeding mother.

The transmission of the HIV virus to the child can be significantly reduced if pregnant women take AZT. The transmission of HIV virus can be totally avoided, if a woman knows she is HIV positive and can afford to feed her child with bottled milk. The issue that should be raised at this point is who has access to these preventive tools; who knows that these tools are available; and how the knowledge of is and accessibility to preventive tools distributed.

What is unique about women's physiological condition that put them at risk of HIV/AIDS? To answer this question one needs to understand how the viruses enter the human body. It is long known that the virus most easily enters when it is in contact with an open body part. Women's bodies have greater areas of mucous membranes, which put them at risk of the HIV virus. The greater the areas of exposure, the higher the risks of infection are. This means if a woman is not protected a great quantity of sexual fluids can be transferred from a man to a woman's body. Second if male sexual fluids contain a higher viral load, the question which is central for public health strategic thinking and human right advocates is how women can protect themselves from such biological conditions of exposures.

The relative probability of HIV infections per exposure has been established. According to the World Bank report (1997), per 1000 exposure in vaginal sex the risk of infection from HIV positive women to healthy men is about 0.33 to 1. When it comes to HIV positive men to healthy

women, the risk increases more than two fold and reaches 1 to 2. From HIV positive men, to healthy men in anal sex, the risk is even higher: 5-30. The risk of needle exchange is about 3. The risk of transmission from mother to child is about 130-480. In exposure to contaminated blood, the risk is the highest and it is about 900-1000. If the size of women's mucosal membrane that could be exposed to HIV virus in an unprotected sex is bigger than the men's mucosal membrane and the concentration of HIV virus in men's sexual fluid is very high. It is clear that when it comes to the risk of being infected, women are in a more disadvantaged position compared to men. Preventive tools have something to do with the ability to buy preventive measures such as condoms, and to demand for safe sex.

For women to have access to preventive measures and demand safe sex, they should have access to necessities such as food, shelter and clothing that can be achieved if they are guaranteed equal opportunities in life. In many societies, most of the resources are under the control of men. In such social conditions, women fear to demand the use of a condom by their partner since it could result in lose means of survival. In addition, if women are not empowered in their affairs and control the ideologies that govern them and be part of setting values for the community, they will remain at risk. The issue of women's rights therefore is central in containing the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

It is also known that a number of factors influence the risk of HIV/AIDS mother to infect her children. This is particularly true of the viral load carried by the mother. The higher the load of the HIV virus in the mothers' blood, the higher the risk of the transmission to the child. A low CD4 count is also associated with increased risk. Anti-retroviral drugs are known to decrease the viral load and inhibit viral reproduction, and in fact this decreases the risk of infection. From the framework of human rights, it is important to ask why some can afford to buy such drugs and others cannot, why resources are unfairly distributed the way they are. Socio-economic conditions of Women and HIV transmission is seen as the extent to which individuals or groups are able to realize their aspirations and satisfy their needs, and have the ability to change or cope with a changing environment. During the mid 1800s, political economist Fredric Engel studied the health conditions of working people in England and identified the conditions that are responsible for differences in separate social classes. In his study, Engel made clear the mechanism by which the social conditions in which the workers live and work can affect their health. Engle established how social conditions such as poverty, poor housing, clothing, diet and lack of sanitation directly led to infectious and other diseases common among the workers. As discussed above, Virchow suggested that disease is not something personal and special, but only a manifestation of life under pathological social conditions. The Ottawa charter of health promotion clearly identified the prerequisites for health: peace, shelter, education, food, income, a stable ecosystem, sustainable resources, social justice and equity (WHO, 1986). Knowing the number of women with HIV/AIDS is high, the question that public health students should ask and try to answer is the pathological conditions in which women live. How do socio-economic conditions of women restrict their ability to make choices in life? How are these social and economic conditions determined? Are impoverished societies less healthy than the well to do groups? Where does the pathogenesis of the social and economic conditions lie? Once infected, the poor are more likely to progress to active disease.

Let me bring into light one of my findings in my Ph.D. thesis research. When I investigated the impact of the massive mobilization of young Oromo men to the war front by the Ethiopian government (on going since 1975 to the present), I tried to establish what had happened to the women who had lost their husbands to the war front; or what has happened to the young girls

that were supposed to get married to these young men when the young men were recruited to the war front. What I found was that many of those young married women when they learned that their husbands had died, in order to support the family, became involved in commercial sex. Some of them married already married men as second or third wives. In addition, as the result of massive military recruitment in many regions of Oromia, the ratio of men and women was altered. As a result, there were not enough men to marry these young girls. Since cultural norms expected the young girls to get married, they married older men, who were already married. In some cases, they left their home village to go to towns and cities to work in bars and trade sex. This had significant implication to the HIV/AIDS in Oromia. The discrepancy in the ratio of men and women did not stay for long as HIV/AIDS killed many women and finally matched the number of men who died in the war front.

I also made an effort to capture the experiences of the Oromo men who were involuntarily recruited to war front and returned from the war after 1991. What I found was really eye opening. The war front was so intense the survival rate of these militias was minimal. The Ethiopian government took for granted that these involuntary recruited militias would not survive the war and they would not have peaceful life. The government did not intend to inform these militias about HIV/AIDS and its preventive measures. From the perspective of these young militias, the war consumed thousands of their friends and colleagues and they were not in a psychological condition to think beyond the day-to-day war news. These militias were so depressed that they followed only war news; they made no effort to learn from the media about anything else. To overcome their daily depression, when they get a break, they go to nearby towns and cities to get high in alcohol and spend a night or two with commercial sex workers. As a result, when the war abruptly ended in 1991 these young men unwittingly played a major role in the spread of the HIV virus in Oromia.

War and instability are major factor in the spread of the HIV/AIDS in Africa and most military are known to be HIV positive. Although the war and the instability affect women and children the most, these instabilities are not the design of women. Participation of women in politics and setting of social policies should become a norm in future societies. Possibly women full participation in politics might differently shape the politics of the world. As I pointed out, HIV/AIDS is identified with the poor, racially marginalized and women. This again has implication in determining what, if anything should be done in order to contain the disease or find a treatment or a vaccine. Women need to take this issue seriously and challenge the dominant ideology. It should be clear that domination is about limiting choices in life and mimicking that should live at the cost of the other. Access to anti-retroviral drugs has significant public health effects. The higher the viral load of the mother, the higher the chances of transmission of the HIV virus. Anti-retroviral drugs decrease the viral load and inhibit viral reproduction and this significantly reduces the risk of infection. In countries where HIV/AIDS patients get access to anti-retroviral drugs, they are able to slow down infection rates. HIV/AIDS has killed those who were in the productive age group, and in many communities the disease left has left the elderly and the children. Killing productive age has affected the capacity of many communities to sustain themselves. This has further deteriorated the social conditions of the poor communities. This condition exacerbated the food security in which women live and increased the risk of HIV/AIDS.

Malnutrition

Poverty is a denial of opportunities in life (Sen, 1999). This means that malnutrition is one of the main indicators of human rights conditions. For example, Article 25 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states, “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, and medical care.” The human body is dependent on its entire environment, including food, air and water. Food, water, and air along with our eating habits are important determinants of physiological health. Apart from supplying the needs of basic metabolic functioning, sufficient energy is needed to meet the demand of work, fight diseases and resist infections. Thus, food and nutrition security are fundamentally important in prevention, care, treatment and easing the burden of HIV/AIDS epidemic (Gillespie and Kadiyala, 2005)

Denial of access to these basic necessities in life is a violation of the right to life. Lack of access to balanced diets has implication for the body’s ability to fight infectious diseases and have a good immune system. For example, the incubation period for HIV/AIDS in the developing world is believed to be a short six to ten years. With HIV, death comes more quickly for untreated patients in developing countries as compared to the rich countries. People who are able to eat enough nutritious food and lead stress-free lives as well as who are not exposed to multiple infections will stay healthy and live longer (Barnett, and Whiteside, 2002). Malnutrition is a major factor in a weakened immune system. Weak immune systems deteriorate the health conditions and increase the risk of HIV/AIDS infections. For example, vitamin A deficiency is known to be associated with increased genital ulcers and cervical herpes. In its turn, ulcer and cervical herpes and other venereal diseases are known to increase the risk of HIV/AIDS. This suggests that those women and men who cannot afford to consume nutritious foods are at greater risk of HIV/AIDS infections than those who can afford such foods.

Nutrients are building blocks of our immune system. If a woman is already infected, if she has no access to nutritious foods, her immune system deteriorates fast, and in the weakened immune system the HIV virus will reproduce fast and increase the pool of the virus in the body. This further increases the risk of transmission to a sexual partner or child. For example, it is known that malnutrition weakens epithelial and placental integrity and increases mother to child transmission (Gillespie and Suneetha, 2005). In addition, maternal nutrition is directly associated with maternal health. Poor nutrition reduces the mother’s resistance to infection. According to Lintonen (2005), in Third World countries poor maternal nutrition is a major contributing factor to ill health.

During pregnancy, the risks of HIV virus transmission from mother to child depend on the physical condition of the mother. These conditions include mother’s nourishment and general health. The issues of women’s rights become central, because power relations are implicated in the issue of affordability and knowledge. As discussed above, since women are naturally at a higher risk than men, to balance the disadvantage social and health policies should address the outstanding issues such as the ability to choose in life. Regarding those who cannot feed themselves, policy makers need to recognize the possibility that these people are denied opportunities in life. If it is about those women who are working but still could not afford, policy makers need to recognize that the dominant groups often devolve the work they do. If the issue is about unemployment, the problem should be seen as the denial of opportunities to work.

For example, if society recognizes the importance of children, childbearing and childrearing should be recognized as valuable work.

HIV/AIDS and Opportunistic Infections

According to Lopez (2001) malnutrition and poor sanitation were the dominant hazards, responsible for almost a quarter of the global burden. The HIV virus is known to suppress the immune system of patients. Once infected, the poor are more likely to progress to active AIDS disease. As the HIV virus progressively suppresses the immune systems of patients, other diseases known as opportunistic microorganisms affect HIV positive individuals. The risks of infection from opportunistic microorganisms are based on the quality of food and water they consume and the sanitary conditions of the place they live and work (Massurr, Henery; Kaplan, Jonathan et al, 2002). These conditions are not fairly distributed among patients. For those who can afford to choose in life, the more they can control the risk of infection from opportunistic microorganisms. For example, among HIV/AIDS patients the sanitary condition of the places where the person live and work, the quality of food and water the person consumes will affect as to risk of infection from opportunistic microorganisms. Again this goes back to issues of affordability such as living in well-maintained houses, consuming good quality of food and water and choosing work conditions.

Policymaking is an effective tool in health promotion. For example, social policy influences the rewards individuals receive for having attained position in society. However, policymaking is related to power relations as such the distribution of social determinant condition of health should be critically examined from the framework of human rights. There is a need to recreate the social environment that fairly distributes social determinants of health.

Socio-Cultural Factors

Male domination manifested through cultural norms. In many parts of the world, men determine women's affairs. Social and cultural norms are largely constructed from the perspective of men. In many societies, men are entitled to have more than one wife and older men marry younger women. In addition, there are widespread rapes. For example, if a woman is found having premarital sex other than her husband, she is charged first, as if she is the only responsible party. In many cases, women who are usually the victims get victimized.

Discussions and Conclusions

In the absence of vaccination and treatment for the deadly HIV/AIDS epidemic, many societies are facing enormous challenges to contain it. Examining social policies from the framework of women's rights has several significant implications for efforts to contain HIV/AIDS. First, linking the two enhances our knowledge about HIV/AIDS and widens the scope at which public health should work to contain the epidemic. Developing a critical understanding of the relationship between human rights and HIV/AIDS helps individuals and societies to change their attitudes, and fosters policy changes. Second, linking human rights violations and the HIV/AIDS epidemic in general, and women in particular, promotes the need to center on women's needs and aspirations as part of the general public health discourse. Framing public health policies from the perspective of the marginalized widens our scope and does not imply leaving out the dominant. Third, in many societies a socially constructed definition about power relations between men and women are taken as normal. Analyzing HIV/AIDS from the framework of human rights reveals that gender and other forms of domination are social ills,

which create conditions that can exacerbate the biological process. Fourth, the HIV/AIDS epidemic disproportionately affects more women than men. The fact is that HIV/AIDS has as many other diseases, its own pathways. The higher number of HIV/AIDS patients among women reflects women's biology, their subordination and domination by men, illiteracy and poverty level. The distribution of resources goes along the political power relationships. Whether or not the resource of the country is big or small, it should be fairly distributed. Women should have equal say in the social, economic and political affairs of the country. The underlying cause of the HIV/AIDS epidemic is about human rights, social and economic injustice than just sexual behavior. Fifth, the higher number of women with HIV/AIDS is also explained in terms of women's biology. Understanding that in HIV/AIDS epidemics if women's biology places them at higher risk compared to men, then the need for women to determine about their affairs becomes more important. Women need to equally participate in policymaking and in shaping century-old hegemonic male-centered morality and normality.

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Oromo Youth

Kulani Jalata

The basis of building an Oromo nation falls in the hands of Oromo youths everywhere. It is Oromo youths who can contribute to developing and liberating Oromia. In this paper, I would like to discuss the roles of Oromo youths in Diaspora and also what they are going through being raised as adolescence in a Western society.

Adolescence is a very important development period between childhood and adulthood. In some cultures, this transition is very brief and achieved through some form of rite of passage. For example, the Oromo Gadaa system of age groups that are each assigned a different role and purpose because of increasing in age set. However, in Western cultures, it extends from the onset of puberty around 12 years of age, to about 17 to 18 years.

Following this transition from childhood is a period of biological/pubertal change, formal operational thinking, and change in social status like family power status or eligibility to vote and work. These changes greatly affect upon family relationships, peer relationships, and school. In the family, both parents and siblings play a significant role of teaching socialization and developmental characteristics in an adolescent. Through peer relations, they gather positive impact on cognitive, social cognitive, linguistic, and moral development (“Adolescence,” 21). Researchers say that it is most likely through interactions with peers that an individual is able to learn skills such as cooperation and understanding (“Adolescence,” 21). Usually, these peer relations take place at school where the environment needs to suit the adolescent so their highest potential can be reached. This school environment is responsible for essentially most of the development of an adolescent’s personality, values, and social relationships.

Once these alterations ranging from family to school take form, they produce other changes like the development of an identity through periods of exploration and commitment, decision-making of one’s plan of achievement for a career through future education, increasing of maturity, and a feeling for need of independence.

I just described the framework of an adolescence raised in a Western society. But, this framework becomes quite complicated when one tries to fit the situation of Oromo Youths in Diaspora. Oromos already have their own culture, language, history, values, and much more. Thus, having to adapt to another culture, language, values, and history will force them to have to exert extra effort. Going to school everyday to become educated or just to survive in a society, Oromo youths must adapt to their environment and in the meantime be aware of their Oromoness, their identity. Unfortunately, many Oromo youths today are assimilating instead of just adapting. To assimilate, they are forgetting their Oromoness, refusing to practice it, or just decline to learn it. Reasons range from not wanting to exert extra effort to learn two cultures and languages or that their parents are not teaching their children to be aware of their true identity. This challenge of maintaining one’s identity by resisting assimilation is not only the problem of Oromo youths. Many young Africans from other countries relate to the Oromos.

Professor Jonathan Moyo of Gwanda High School in Zimbabwe stated that, “. . . Youths should take an active interest in the politics of their country as it has direct influence on their lives.” He said it was important for young people to understand the history and culture of their country instead of parading that of some Western countries like the United States. Moreover, he explained that there was nothing wrong with Zimbabwean youth going to learn in Western countries as long as they came back to develop their country. He went on, “we do not want to be modern slaves, so remember to come back home because there is no place like home.” Professor

Moyo was correct that there is no place like home because home is the only place you can finally reveal and express your true cultural identity.

There is more than one view of cultural identity. Professor Stuart Hall of the African Foundation for Development (AFFORD) organization, wrote an article with explaining that there are at least two different ways of thinking about cultural identity. He said,

“The first position defines cultural identity in terms of one shared culture, a sort of collective ‘one true self,’ hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves,’ which people with a shared history and ancestors hold in common. Within the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as ‘one people,’ with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions. . .of our actual history. . .”

This view of cultural identity relates to older Oromos in Diaspora. Hall argues that there is a second, related but different view of cultural identity. Cultural identities, explains Hall, “come from somewhere and have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. . .” In other, words Hall’s second perspective of cultural identity emphasizes on a range of outside or western influences. This aspect of cultural identity connects to a great degree to the Oromo youths in Western countries.

These Oromo youths are bound to be influenced by their environment through religion, school, peers, television, radio, and food. It is quite impossible not to. But for these youths not be aware of the roots of their true identities is wrong. For example, most Oromo youths today are not attending this conference. I know, personally, that it is difficult to fit in to society if you hold on to your roots, but I also know it is the only way to feel whole. No matter if you totally ignore or forget you are Oromo, you still will never fit in.

This problem of ignoring their Oromoness generates from a myriad of areas. It could be poor educational standards in schools, the lack of discipline tolerated in society, and the diverse range of cultural influences impinging on young people. Seen from the view of Oromo youth, the main issue may be survival and credibility in today’s society. They might describe themselves differently depending on the context and circumstances. For example, at a family wedding, they may have no problem with identifying themselves as Oromo. However, once back into their community environment, they refer to themselves as “African-American” or even “Ethiopian” depending on the condition in which they find themselves.(afford.com..., 32). Part of this problem, reports the AFFORD article, is that Oromo youth growing up in Western countries “live in an environment that essentially denigrates virtually anything to do with Africa: In the media, in the racism on the streets, in the schools, everywhere. Little wonder then that young people often feel ashamed, or at best indifferent, about being African.”

On a study made by Bika by-Abaganda of AFFORD organization, a dialogue with young Africans largely from Uganda ranging in ages from mid-teens to 22 years olds was done to approach a discussion about the clash of the Western culture in which they are living in and their own African culture. From the start, the youths already noted that they were aware of the general atmosphere of negative information about Africa. However, what came across from the discussion, reported Bika by-Abaganda, “was that far from ramming their Ugandan culture down their throats, the parents of these young men, in general, had failed to communicate key aspects of their culture to them, or to bring alive in any meaningful or engaging way. The result amongst

this particular group was a general lack of curiosity about their [African] culture.”

The situation of these Ugandan youths relates deeply to many Oromo youths in Diaspora. Unity is missing in many families. Parents are not conducting their roles to teach their heritage and youths are simply ignoring it. It is this, I fear deeply, that will make an independent, free Oromia harder to accomplish. Individual youths will have no effect, whereas all youths standing together as Oromo nationalists will greatly affect Oromia’s liberation.

However, this beautiful and possible outcome all depends on now. At this moment in time, now, if parents are fulfilling their moral obligation to make their children aware of their culture, their language, history, politics, and struggle for a free Oromia, and if their children are demanding to learn it. This assumes that every Oromo parent knows Oromo culture, but in reality, this is not the case. Therefore, in order to teach their children, Oromo parents should learn their culture, history, traditions, and much more to teach it to their offspring. Once accomplished, many Oromo youths will have a strong spirit to contribute to the Oromo society because they will know that the Oromo society is as good as any other society. This will be profoundly enhancing an independent and liberated Oromia. Therefore, I challenge all Oromo parents who do not know their culture and history to learn it and teach it to their children.

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Power Relationship and Economic Vulnerability of Marginalized People in Ethiopia: The Oromo Case

Bichaka Fayissa

Introduction

This paper examines how the vertically stratified and rigidly hierarchical dominant socio-political culture in much of Ethiopia has historically typified a skewed power relationship between the Abyssinian colonizers and their subjects (the Oromo and other nationalities), resulting in their political marginalization and economic vulnerability for over a century. Vaughn and Tronvoll (2002) have noted that the processes of socialization from birth teach the Abyssinians (Amhara/Tigre) elites that people are not equal by instilling an understanding of roles and statuses which are assigned to different individuals, making them as either marginalized and disenfranchised (as the Oromo, Sidama, the Hadiya nations, etc.), or privileged and empowered (as Abyssinian elites) based on their nationality, ethnicity, clan, class, gender, and age.

It is not, therefore, surprising that such an antagonistic relationship between the colonizers and their subjects breeds a non-egalitarian distribution of power which is deeply entrenched and resistant to change. Given the agents (leaders or misleaders) of the state control and dominate the public life and major resources including budgets, salaried employment outside the major cities, land services, etc., the issue of economic development and equity of access to resources and decision making powers of the state in Ethiopia is of a paramount consideration. The disparity of access to the political power and economic resources among marginalized people in Ethiopia, particularly the Oromo, has been the prime root of recurrent conflicts prior to and since the 1991 ascendance to power of the current Tigrean-led minority dictatorship in Ethiopia. Such centralization of the political power in turn translates to the control of society's economic and cultural resources.

Obviously, the monopoly of both the political and economic power by the ruling elites has had incalculable negative outcomes on the welfare of the Oromo and other marginalized people in Ethiopia in terms of heavy tax burdens, inequitable education and health services, restricted investment and employment opportunities, food insecurity, threatened livelihood, and economic vulnerability. This paper investigates how the dictatorial rule and pervasive abuse of state power in Ethiopia has resulted in the political and economic malaise featuring recurrent conflicts, political instability, diminished productivity and growth, widespread income inequality, abject poverty and human misery, environmental degradation, food insecurity, and economic vulnerability. In this paper, I will try address three questions related to the topic of my remarks. What is the nature of power relationship between the successive Abyssinian rulers and the Oromo and how has it hampered the economic growth and development of the Oromo and other marginalized nationalities in the Ethiopian empire state? What are some outcomes and manifestations of the political and economic domination of the various regimes in Ethiopia? What can be done to improve the welfare of the Oromo and other oppressed nationalities such as the Sidama, Ogaden, Southern Nations and Nationalities?

Power Relation and Political Culture in Ethiopia

Hoben (1970) has noted that the Abyssinian political culture emphasizes a strict hierarchical understanding of society where each member of socio-political position and status is

clearly defined and understood. He states that, “it is a fundamental postulate of the Amhara/Tigre culture that good social order can be created and maintained only through legitimate control deriving from God.” In contrast, Levine (1974: 128) asserts “The Oromo are in many ways the antithesis of the Amhara culture. Where the Amhara/Tigre system is hierarchical, the Oromo is egalitarian. Where the Amhara is individualistic, the Oromo is solidaristic.” The pattern of social interaction in Ethiopia hence sustains a strictly hierarchical stratification of society where one is constrained by a largely invisible, but rigid system of collective sanctions to obey orders from above. According to Vaughn and Tronvoll (2002), “this applies whether the orders are a fatherly command to assist in the chores of the household, or an instruction from the *kebele*, the lowest administrative structure established during the Derg to influence the local political support for the military junta. This means that the traditional socio-political framework of the Abyssinians defines both the relevant political arena of interaction and the specific gatekeepers who control access to these arenas at different levels.

The hierarchical expression of Abyssinian political culture also creates various mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion. Those in control (gatekeepers) define the socio-political agenda for discourse at different societal levels (household/family, or within village/community) such that most of Ethiopia’s rural citizens do not imagine that they should debate and select from alternative means of asserting control over their own lives. Under such socio-political environment, there is little objective alternative to the communication of political programs from center to periphery. It is the “Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front’s (EPRDF)” political agenda of domination which is communicated to the local level through its state controlled mass media and administrative structures, sharpening the domination, marginalization, and economic vulnerability of the Oromo and other colonial subjects in the Ethiopian regime.

Since the TPLF dominated EPRDF regime came to power in 1991, the operation of the political system in many regions, especially in Oromia, has resulted in the further marginalization of the Oromos and other nationalities in many respects. For instance, its privatization policy has helped the transfer of state owned businesses to the coffers of its party far below their values to the so called Endowment Fund for the Rehabilitation of Tigray (EFFORT). Many of the privatized industries are owned by EFFORT, the party that controls most of the privatized businesses Under the umbrella of EFFORT, a range of commercial enterprises and factories in trade, agriculture, cement production, textiles, and garmenting, livestock and leather, transport, mining, engineering and finance were established (Vaughn and Tronvoll, 2002) resulting in the emergence of new monopolistic and unfair trading practices.

Privatization of public enterprises was supposed to stimulate private sector development as one of the primary objectives of the first phase of structural adjustment program (SAP). Through manipulations of bidding processes, control of bank credit facilities, corruptions, and related methods, non-Tigrean investors were denied the opportunity to benefit from the program. Parallel to privatization and ownership diversification of public enterprises, there emerged a huge conglomerate of enterprises owned by the TPLF through its prominent members and supporters fronting as shareholders. They are now interlinked with the EFFORT, which was formed in 1995 with an envisaged total investment of 2.7 billion birr. TPLF companies formed earlier include: MEGA Communication, SUN Construction, and GUNA Trading. According to one study: [By] the end of 1996 most of the companies set up by TPLF prior to the formation of EFFORT had been restructured with EFFORT taking over most of the shares previously held by the TPLF-front persons. Some other companies controlled by the TPLF through EFFORT became minor shareholders and a few shares went to high-ranking TPLF members (who are also

sitting on the Board of Directors of EFFORT) who became Chairpersons of the Board of Directors of these restructured companies

Another serious negative outcome of the regime's total control and marginalization of the Oromo other nationalities is the flourishing of its "humanitarian" organization and the banning of a genuine Oromo NGO such as Oromo Relief Association (ORA) replacing it with government controlled Oromo NGO (Hunde). The closing of ORA has negatively affected Oromos who are victims of war, internal refugees from the *Wayane* government persecution, those displaced by state sponsored instability, and drought, and food insecurity. On several occasions, the regime has used food as weapon of discipline by restricting the reaching out of NGOs to emergencies and crises. Moreover, by falsely convincing foreign governments its "pro-growth economic policies," it has managed to restrict and threaten genuine international NGOs from directly reaching those in need (food, shelter, water, and health services etc.) by monitoring and curtailing their operations. Here, I must mention that the TPLF lead government has limited the services of NGOs and bilateral assistance to be channeled only through the government bureaucracy rather than independently deciding where help is needed in the economically vulnerable regions. Consequently, bilateral and multilateral government funding through the NGOs dropped off dramatically as the international community renewed government-to-government relations after the fall of the military junta in 1991 (Vaughn Tronvoll, 2002). Over the last decade, the Ethiopian government has imposed a strict regulation and monitoring of national and international NGOs, curbing their income generating, commercial and autonomous activities, and requiring that they work through government structures.

The culmination of abuse of its state power is manifested by the recent creation of a *Gestapo* type administrative structure known as the *Gott* and *Garee misoma* system under the *kebele* (HRW, May 2005). In the next section, I will summarize both of these evil systems and speculate their economic welfare implications for the Oromo and other nationalities subject to this system.

Ethiopian Government's Mechanisms of Control of Rural Communities in Oromia: The *Kebele* System

Since the overthrow of the Derg dictatorship in 1991, the formal structure of local government in Ethiopia, called *kebele*, has largely remained intact. The EPRDF retained the *kebele* as the smallest unit of local government throughout Ethiopia and has continued to use the system to consolidate and extend the power of the ruling party (HRW, 2005). While originally it was intended to help implement the Derg's ambitious rural development agenda and reform program, the *kebele* system quickly evolved into a highly effective mechanism of control and repression (Rahamato, 1994 and Pausewang, 2002). Young (1997) lists the functions of *kebele* officials to include: monitoring the activities of their communities and reporting any form of dissent to higher authorities, disseminating government propaganda, implementing government policies, and maintaining general order and discipline.

It is important to note that most of the rural population consists of subsistence farmers who rely on agents of the government to supply them with a range of essential services and agricultural inputs. Among other functions, *kebele* officials distribute fertilizer to farmers throughout Oromia on credit, collect debts when they come due, verify and approve the identity of farmers for getting access to government services including medical services and secondary schools for their children in town. Most of the *kebeles* have their own courts of justice and small

prison houses. They have the power to issue decisions in local disputes and mete out imprisonment minor disputes.

Farmers who fail to pay their fertilizer debts on time are regularly imprisoned for more than a month at a time. Human Rights watch has recently confirmed that a large proportion of the population had served some time in prison for failing to repay for fertilizer debts (HRW, 2005). Debtors were released only after they were forced to sell off their livestock and other personal property to raise enough money to pay what they owe. At the same time, those farmers who have good relations with *Kebele* officials were allowed to carry massive amounts of debt from year to year while for others repayment is strictly enforced. One farmer reported to Human Rights Watch that the enforcers of debt repayment have not paid for their fertilizer. As if the abuses of the *kebele* officials were not enough, the government has recently an entirely new set of quasi-government administrative structure below the *kebele* in rural communities throughout Oromia called *Gott* and *Garee*.

The *Gott* and *Garee* System

With instruction from the central government, the regional government in Oromia has created two quasi-government structures in rural communities throughout the region below the *kebele* level. Rural *kebeles* are now divided into groups of households called *gott* encompassing between sixty to ninety households. Each *gott* is divided into smaller groups of roughly thirty households called *garee* *misoma* in Afaan Oromo, meaning “groups for development.” These structures were replicated from the TPLF which used it against the Derg. The *gott* and *garee* systems were introduced in Oromia about a year ago (2004).

High-level regional government officials claim that the *gott* and *garee* are simply voluntary associations of farmers who are interested in promoting development in their communities. In fact, the head of Bureau of Mass Organization, Culture, and Sports and Social Affairs which oversees these structures claims that they had been created in response to widespread popular demand that the government organizes farmers into small groups for promoting development efforts. He further argues that no farmer is forced to participate in either structure, or any of its activities. Nothing, of course, is further from the truth than this assertion. Based on interviews by the Human Rights Watch, the *gott* and *garee* structures had been imposed on the rural communities from above without any kind of consultation (HRW, 2005).

In principle, *gott* and *garee* committees and officials are freely elected by all their members. In practice, however, the officials are picked by show of hands from among candidates chosen by *kebele* officials. *Gott* and *garee* officials dispense significant legal decisions and resource distribution functions in the rural communities. They are very young men (students in their early twenties) who have no experience or real stature within the community and are hand-picked by *kebele* officials based only on their malleability and support for the ruling party. One farmer who was interviewed by Human Rights Watch (2005) lamented that there are no elders among the *gott* and *garee* officials. The local communities are abused and mistreated by these young people who are the tools of the ruling party.

Forced Labor under *Garee*

On the surface, the *garees* have undertaken a number highly visible development projects in rural communities in Oromia. These projects include construction of irrigation systems, road repair, and digging of wells and latrines. However, these activities are simply undertaken only for the consumption of the international community. Participation in these projects is, however,

not voluntary. Every rural household is assigned to a *gott* or *garee* is regularly required to contribute to unpaid labor towards whatever development projects its *garee* chooses to implement. Generally, one or two members of every household are expected to spend one day per week to carry out duties assigned by the *garee* officials. Such a practice of forced labor is in clear violation of the international law and its own constitution. The *garees* have the power to impose strict punishment of \$2-15 *birr*, depending on the community, a fine which is more than what one could hope to earn in a day. Those who miss three times are subject to forced labor and fines. Farmers resented the commitment of so much time to the *garees*' "development schemes" which designed to control, monitor, and subject them to punishment rather than improve their welfare. Human Rights Watch (2005) has confirmed that the *garees* have been employed to achieve a level of control and surveillance that was not possible under the *kebele* system alone.

Forced Political Meetings

Both the *gott* and *garee* officials have the power to call a meeting of their members at least once a week and some communities even more frequently. The severity of punishment increases with the number days missed from monetary fine to fine and imprisonment. These group meetings have no development oriented and productive purpose other than disseminating government propaganda. Farmers are forced to attend meetings because they cannot afford the fines. In a way, people are trapped between hard realities hindering their progress making life unbearable. The *gott* and *garee* system is a repressive system which is antidevelopment considering the amount time spent on an unproductive activity.

The Chilling Effect of the Gott and Garee System on Speech

The system targets and labels those who ask questions why people are not free to speak without incrimination. The livelihood of those who are labeled as OLF supporters is put at risk and destroyed. For instance, a single mother who sold food to support her son was targeted by *gott* and *garee* officials who harassed her clients from buying food from her because they labeled her house as an OLF house. The officials also intimidated the relatives of the woman to isolate her for the same charge.

Restrictions on the Freedom of Movement

Local authorities in much of Oromia have used the *garee* systems to limit the ability of people in rural communities to travel outside of their communities without permission. The severity of this regulation varies from place to place. In some cases, farmers have to tell their officials orally while in others, they have to fill out papers for approval. If someone is visiting a relative stays overnight without informing the *garee* officials, the individual will be punished in monetary fine and prison term. In the people fail to report a visitor and found to do so, then are labeled as OLF supporter and punished. Farmers are also restricted from going to market to buy or sell their produces on any day except Saturday, they can not travel to take their children to school in another town and they can not go to hospital without the approval of *garee* officials. Failure to participate in normal and routine activities is punishable with imprisonment. If farmers are found at a market other than on Saturday, they arrested and beaten up. Despite such draconian measures, popular resistance to the new restrictions proved to so widespread that *woreda* officials ordered the *garee* to relax them at the beginning of 2005. Under this system, farmers can not exercise their rights to a fair and free election without permission.

Economic Implications of the *Gott* and *Garee* System

It does not take a great deal of imagination to speculate the negative impacts of the mechanisms of control and domination in rural communities of Oromia imposed by regime in Ethiopia. Forced labor for failing to pay for fertilizer under *Garee* is not only a violation of the regime's ceremonial constitution, but it is also a breach of the international law (ILO, June 1957). Nobody need be subjected to forced labor for the provision of fertilizer by the government which is for a public good. In much the same way that the Gulag of the former Soviet Union had great human suffering, the practice of forced labor in Oromia has dehumanized and exploited the Oromo people. Only in a pseudo-federal state could such insanity inflict irreparable damage on the communities. Many of the work assignments in such penal institutions of *gott* and *garee* are meaningless and punitive. The Marxist-Leninist government of Meles Zenawi clearly borrowed these evil practices from his ideological god-fathers Lenin and Stalin. The objective of forced labor is to make life unbearable for the Oromos which is one of symptoms of genocide. Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1975) describes such Stalinist forced labor as essentially a mechanism of genocide.

The current regime in Ethiopia again using forced meetings of farmers for the dissemination of the ruling party's political propaganda. Again the *gott* and *garee* systems are used to mobilize the masses by instilling fear, social mobility (promotion of loyalist species, and encouraging on one another (some do to settle personal scores) which again is borrowed from the 1966-1976 Cultural Revolution of the Peoples Republic of China. Farmers are forced to waste their time on destructive and unproductive events which reduce their economic welfare.

The restriction imposed on the freedom of movement in Oromia is another anti-development mechanism whose aim is to keep farmers under siege. Farmers have to waste time to get approvable to go a hospital in another town and to send their children to school in another town. The fact that farmers have to get permission from the local officials to go market, or look for a job also imposes added burdens on them. In rural communities where the officials enforced this rule with impunity (Ambo and western Oromia), there were mass resistance such that the officials had to relax their rules a little bit.

Conclusion

In this short paper, we have briefly examined how the colonial power relationship of the Ethiopian regime resulted in the political and economic marginalization of the Oromo nations. We have taken a glimpse of how the pervasive abuse of state power by the previous and current regimes in Ethiopia through various antidevelopment mechanisms of control of rural communities such as forced labor, forced political meetings, suppression of free speech, and restriction of free movement of people under the *gott* and *garee* local administrative structures have exposed the Oromo people to economic vulnerability. The question is what can and might be done about it?

In their popular book, *Development as Freedom*, Sen (1999) and Owens (1989) have argued the centrality of freedom as a precondition for economic development. They view that a freedom-centered development has several advantages over more conventional views that espouse development as a source of human freedom. First, it provides a deeper basis of evaluation of development, allowing is to concentrate on the objective of individual freedom rather than merely on proximate means such as the growth of GDP, or industrialization, or technological progress. The enhancement of lives and liberties has intrinsic relevance that

distinguishes it from the enlargement of commodity production or of other material of convenience (Sen, 2001).

Second, since freedoms of different kinds contribute to enhancing freedoms other kinds, a freedom-centered view of development also offers important insights. By focusing on the interconnections between freedoms of different types, it take us well beyond the narrow perspective of seeing each freedom in isolation. We inhabit in a world of many institutions involving (the market, the government, the judiciary, the political parties, the media, etc.) and we have to see how they can supplement and strengthen each other, rather than contradicting each other.

Third, the broad perspective of freedom as a condition for development also helps to separate between (1) repressive interventions of the state stifling liberty, initiative and enterprise, and in crippling the working of individual agency and cooperative action and (2) the supportive role of the state in enhancing the effective freedoms of individuals through the provision of public education, health care, social safety nets, good macroeconomic policies, and in safeguarding industrial competition and ecological sustainability. The freedom-centered view captures the constructive role free human agency as an engine of change. This view radically differs from seeing people as passive beneficiaries of cunning development. More specific recommendations for improving the welfare of marginalized nations also include the rehabilitation of the cultural, natural, and environmental resources of Oromia.

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The Bleak Fate of Oromo Natural Resources in the Era of Globalization

Gobena Huluka

Abstract

Oromia's natural resources such as soil, water, air, forest and other agricultural derived produces are detrimental for Oromos existence and standard of living. Only sustainable uses of these resources can secure the survival of the current and future Oromia nation state. Unfortunately, the natural resources of Oromia are assaulted by natural and man-made forces that are significantly and irreversibly diminishing their existence and benefit. Past and present Ethiopian governments have become agents for destruction of Oromia's natural resources. Rapid population growth that added more mouth to feed and raw materials needed for export to earn hard currency are the two major factors that have lead to land degradation and forest depletion. Deforestation at 100,000 hectare per year and soil erosion at 2 billion tons per year are too large to ignore.

The current Ethiopian government is bankrolled and functions by the help foreign governments who do so to promote their national interest in Ethiopia and in the region. The government has become an accessory for its financiers and facilitates a smooth flow of crude raw materials to developed markets that may deplete natural resources and pollute the environment. The booming cut-flower industries in Oromia have polluted soil and water, and compromised workers health.

Coffee, the main export of the country, has become a causality of the coffee free market globalization. Oromia coffee farmers are exposed to market shocks without any protection even though governments of other coffee producing countries highly subsidize their coffee farm operations. The exploitation of Oromia's natural resources and marginalization of the Oromos will continue unless Oromos are empowered both politically and economically. Thus, the future looks bleak for Oromia's natural resources due to the following apparent reasons:(1) the government's sole ownership of all land and other natural resources; (2) the government's absolute disregard or inability to care and nurture Oromia's natural resources; (3) government's facilitation of crude exploitation and destruction of Oromia's natural resources; (4) Oromos' inability to be able to defend (political marginalization) their natural resources, and (5) imposition of unfair global market forces on Oromia's resources. Unregulated, contemporary corporate globalization has a potential to destroy sustainability of Oromia's natural resources that will negatively affect the survival of the Oromo nation state.

Background

The Oromia Region is the largest in terms of both population and land area among Ethiopia's States. It has an area of 359,619.8 square kilometers (223,458 square miles) with a population of more than 30 million. The land area of Oromia is approximately the same size as the US States of Alabama, Georgia, Florida and Mississippi combined. The population of ethnic Oromos is the same as the population of these four States combined. Geographically, Oromia is located in the tropics (2^o 40'N to 10^o 35'N and 34^o 05'E to 43^o 11'E) and has varied climate zones depending mainly on the altitude and geographic location. Tropical, subtropical and cool climate zones are prevalent in many areas in Oromia.

According to the Ethiopian Statistical Agency (CSA), Oromia is ranked highest in cattle, poultry, horse, mule, donkey, sheep, goat, etc., productions (CSA 2003; 2004; 2005). Some of these animal resources are used for farming, transportation and as sources of milk, meat, manure, skin and hides. In addition to all these measurable benefits, animal wealth is also associated with prestige social status in Oromo culture (Aguilar, 1996).

Oromia accounts for 75% of Ethiopia's forest cover even though this is only about 3% and 7%, respectively, for Ethiopia and Oromia. Many researchers estimate that Oromia's forest cover decreased from more than 60% during early 1900s to its current minuscule level (Kuru, 1995). Oromia loses 60,000 to 100,000 hectare of forestland each year and afforests about 10,000 hectare with an annual deficient of 10%. If this trend continues unchecked, a simple calculation will yield that there may not be much forest left in Oromia after about thirty years. It is clear that most of Oromia was forested before the conquest, but a rampant deforestation took place within the last 50 years. Possible explanations for the accelerated decline of the forest resources are attributed to the following main reasons: (1) faulty land holding system, (2) urban population growth that has been dependent wood energy and building, (3) Non-indigenous ownership of forestland, and (4) rural population growth and lack of forest protection program and education.

Ethiopia is an undeveloped country with agrarian society that is dependent on subsistence farming. Most of the main staple foods of Ethiopia such as wheat, barely, corn, oats, teff, sorghum, and pulses and oil seeds are produced in Oromia. Oromia is the breadbasket of Ethiopia. Due to the malignant political instability in the country from Minelik to Melese, Oromos have never contributed their full potential to conquer hunger, poverty and underdevelopment. Occasional drought, traditional farming practices, repressive and undemocratic governments have made Ethiopia synonymous with famine and starvation in the world.

There has been a constant food deficient in the country for almost half a century. The dietary energy supply (DES) of Ethiopians is among the lowest in the world and the Sub-Saharan Africa (FAO, 1998). According to this report, Denmark topped the list at 3780 kcal per person per day DES while Ethiopia locked at 1780 kcal. Ethiopia meets only about 70% of its DES, thus, most Ethiopians do not get balanced diet and are undernourished by any standard of measurement. Their main reason Ethiopians including the Oromos are starving is due lack of democratic governance that is consumed on extending its dictatorial rule, but not due to lack of natural resources. Democracy and liberation of peasants from the yoke of dictator government will end the vicious cycle of famine in Ethiopia.

Natural Resources Sustain Dictators

The wealth of nations and people are measured by the resources they possess and their method of utilization. Ancient civilizations such as the Mesopotamian, Babylonian, and others were built on fertile lands of river deltas that supplied ample food for soldiers to fight, kings to rule and the population to engage in remarkable achievements that contributed to world civilization. The current superpowers also have abundant material and human resources that have sustained their systems economically, socially, politically and militarily. The availability of fossil fuel (oil) reserves in the Gulf States has significantly changed the standard of living of the people in those countries. Natural resources have a big role on human achievement, quality of life, and even on political stability of a nation. Great democracies of our time do not have a starving population base even though democracy may not flourish in all rich countries. At the same time,

democracy is not a commodity only rich countries can afford. It is a system of government that upholds individual universal human rights and frees individuals to individually and collectively contribute to end starvation and poverty.

Two facts are very important to understand about natural resources. Natural resources are finite, and are susceptible to destruction. It is only a matter of time before the world will run out of fossil fuel since there is finite reserve of fossil fuel left in the world. Burning fossil fuel produces carbon dioxide, water vapor and energy; and it will take millions of years before the plants take up carbon dioxide for photosynthesis, die, decay and change to fossil fuel. Obviously, one can say that such natural resources are not recyclable and sustainable at human scale.

Oromia's abundant natural resources have not changed the standard of living of the Oromo people because these resources are owned and exploited by dictators. Angola's UNITA rebel leader Joseph Savimbi, Zaire's dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, Charles Taylor's of Liberia exploited their rich diamond resource to stay in power and brutalize their subjects to their final days in power. Sadly, Oromia's natural resources have been used to sustain systems that continue to abuse the Oromo people. Natural resource entitlements and revenue allocations will continue to be indigenous peoples' central question for the foreseeable future.

It will take 500-1000 years to create about one inch (2.54 cm) of surface soil from rocks. However, an intensive rainfall will completely erode this one inch soil that took hundreds of years to create in less than an hour. Soil erosion accounts for a loss of one billion cubic meters per year fertile topsoil in Ethiopia. The soil nutrients, fauna and flora that are lost as the result of erosion are estimated to cost billions of dollars. Most of the eroded soil will be transported by the Nile River and ends up in Egypt and the Sudan. Many studies have demonstrated that the soils deposited in the Nile River delta have the same characteristics as soils found in Ethiopian high lands that are susceptible to erosion.

After observing the destructive nature of soil erosion and consequences that could follow, the 32nd US president Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1937 warned his fellow citizen by saying, "A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people." With modern forest harvesting machines, it may take just few hours to clear trees in a hectare of land, but it will take many decades or even a century for some trees to fully mature. The same can be said about the tiny fraction of time it takes to pollute water resources and the high cost and long time it will take to purify polluted water. In general, it is possible to say that most of the natural resources we depend on are unrenewable at human scale. The residence time to recycle/recreate each of them is counted in hundreds and thousands of years. Oromia's resources that this and the coming generation depend on are diminishing at an alarming rate. This glaring fact is staring at this generation to change the course and pay the needed sacrifices to assure the availability and sustainable use of Oromia's natural resources.

Natural Resources and Globalization

Population growth and modern means of technology, transportation and communication has made the earth a small global village where almost no geographic location is left untouched. Borders and man-made barriers are no more hindering movements of people, goods, images and communications. Globalization is a newly coined word to mean reaching most of the world or increased mobility of goods, services, labor, technology and capital throughout the world. Corporate globalization (global neoliberal capitalism) exploits human and natural resources and designs production of goods and distribution of services for developed markets. The end of cold

war and the rise internet use have significantly contributed to world connectivity, instant and/or virtual communications and decision-making processes.

Economic globalization is then an economic phenomenon of global movements of capital and trade in goods and services. Trade globalization undermines trade barriers, social entitlements and geographic boundaries in search of cheap and natural resources. This has become source of challenge and opportunity for international trade, resource utilization and cooperation. Interaction and to a lesser degree integration of world economies have encountered many problems among which uneven partnership and uneven playing fields have created a bumpy ride especially for the least developed countries in the sub-Sahara region. Obviously, this is attributed mainly to the stage of each economies development that made the least developed countries raw material suppliers for the developed countries. Least developed countries like Ethiopia have only unprocessed crude raw materials for developed countries markets.

This globalization of market economy can be demonstrated by the rapidly growing cut-flower companies in Ethiopia. Oromo farmers are forcefully displaced from their villages for production of flowers for European markets. Toxic pesticide chemicals, excess water and chemical fertilizer are used to produce the best flower in the market at the lowest cost possible to maximize profit. Unfortunately, workers safety, air, water and soil pollutions are ignored to lure foreign investments.

“The Ethiopian Government has sought to entice investors with incentives, including an improved investment code, five-year tax holiday, duty-free import of machinery, and by leasing land out at just 18 dollar per hectare per year. The Government’s plan appears to be working now that 70 new farms have sprung up in the last eight years,. . .Ethiopia ships out 70 tons of flowers every day and the volume is growing and exporters now have to charter daily flights to Europe in addition to using regular scheduled flights.” (Linda Muriuki and Arnold Temple, 2006)

The government extracts some hard currency; the flower companies make profit and leave when profit margin is not acceptable to new green field. But the polluted Oromia’s water and soil will be reservoirs of toxic chemicals for many generations to come. Cost of cleaning the pollution will dwarf all the benefits extracted from the ventures. These problems can be avoided if locals have a role in the decision making process, strict environmental regulations are imposed on the operation of the companies, and a democratic government that cares for the well-being of its people is made possible.

Coffee, the Black Gold and Global Energizer

Most historians agree that coffee originated in the Kaffaa region in Oromia. They further argue that the name coffee was coined for the region it originated from. The story of how the Oromo people started to use coffee berries and its propagation to the world around is too large to try to describe here in detail. Legend has it that an Oromo goat herder observed the stimulated nature of his goats each time they fed on the coffee berries, perhaps known by another name by then. He also observed that his goat favored the coffee berries than other similar berries. Out of curiosity, he himself gave it a try, and then probably shared with his family and the village at large. The special burry that captivated goats now had its chance to energize the human race. The early users might have started boiling, roasting and using it with other ingredients such as butter as other similar beans were used by Oromo villagers, a tradition that still persists. Once

this delicacy was discovered, “the energizer” did not need a billboard for advertisement as good products do not need one. In short time, “coffee” became its name and it has reached the global population by growing in many countries where soil and climatic conditions permit.

Nobody knows exactly when coffee was first used as a commercial beverage. Many suggest that as its popularity grew irresistibly, it is natural to make it available at market places. Thus, selling coffee as a beverage might have started in those countries where had become popular and demand for it. This could probably around its origin that includes the Horn of Africa and the Middle East Regions. Still coffee in Oromia has strong traditions that goes back thousands of years. Today, coffee is global and has an annual retail value of about \$80 billion worldwide. It is a black gold used by all people at different occasions for different motives.

Ethiopia is ranked 2nd in Africa and 5th in the world in coffee production according to some sources (Roumbuts, 2006). Oromia produces about 53% the coffee in Ethiopia that is estimated to be 115,083 tons in 2005 (CSA, 2005). The overall coffee production and plantation in Oromia has been increasing at about 5%. More than 60% Ethiopia’s export income is generated from coffee. If coffee trade is halted or interrupted for some reasons, Ethiopia’s economy will be adversely affected. About 25% of the Ethiopian population is directly engaged in coffee related activity for living.

Coffee and Globalization

Ethiopia is among the least developed countries in the world and is not yet fully integrated to international capital flow. But the life of an Oromo coffee farmer is globally affected. The price of his crop is affected by the weather in Brazil, political condition in Colombia, coffee coverage hectares in Viet Nam and by what Starbuck does in Seattle (USA). Coffee market globalization has created a new challenge for Oromo coffee farmers that have faced the volatility of coffee price shock without any government intervention. This is unlike farmers in developed countries who have access to generous government subsidies and market based price guarantees that will minimize any blows due to market fluctuation. When coffee price dipped to 100 years low in real terms in 2003, millions of poor farmers and their families were exposed to poverty and starvation. Community leaders have described the situations as:

“There are coffee farmers who have never bought any clothes for the last three years, malnutrition is see in coffee growing areas....they cannot buy uniform and food for their children to go to school, therefore the children can not go to school...”Global.exchange.org

With no government safety net and faced with a dilemma that cannot easily overcome, farmers started what is logical for anyone faced with similar situation. The first most logical step was to create an Oromia Coffee Farmers Cooperative Union (OCFCU) that helps small farmers to find new market for their source of life. This has helped introduced their coffee to Fair Trade organization that helps them earn a livable prices for their coffee. Its objective as presented by the organization are to: (1) improve the farmers income, (2) maintain the quality of coffee production, (3) improve and maintain the sustainability of coffee industry, (4) improve quality and productivity of Ethiopian Coffee, (5) regulate local market, and (6) provide farmer with the best services and reliability to clients (OCFCU, 2006).

The other logical alternative was to abandon or diversify coffee production. This has become a viable alterative for many farmers’ in Eastern Oromia. In the words a farmers named Ahmed:

“In Ahmed Mume's village they grow some of the finest coffee in the world. But this year, the 50-year-old will not be harvesting any beans. The father of eight has ripped up his crop and is planning to export a drug he is growing for the first time. Ahmed has turned to *khat* – a mild stimulant banned in North America and many countries in Europe to make ends meet and help put his children through school. “The only option we having is growing *khat*,” Ahmed said while standing in his field in Deder village some 550 km east of the capital Addis Ababa. “Almost all the farmers in the area have done the same because the prices for coffee are so low,” he added from his one-hectare plot in east Hararghe”. A local expert agrees with Ahmed, “An estimated 75 percent of all coffee farmers in the highlands of Hararghe, home to the aromatic Harar coffee, have either uprooted coffee trees to plant *khat* or are growing both”, said Tadesse Meskela, general manager of the OCFCU (IRIN, 2003).

The Central Statistical Agency data also indicates a significant decrease in coffee production where especially *khat* is favorable grown and an increase in *khat* cultivation in 2003. This is not unexpected since producing other cash crops like cotton, sugar, etc., is either not suitable for their locale and/or the production costs will be prohibitive to compete with highly subsidized and established markets for these produces. For a premium Oromia coffee that is sold for \$12 a pound in the United States, an Oromia farmer gets only 15 cents and that is not enough to survive on.

Coffee price globalization has stretched the imagination of an Oromo farmer to a global prospective. Competition is no more limited to Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, etc., that are geographically related to Ethiopia, but with countries that are around the globe. A coffee farmer may control his production efficiency, but the international coffee price is beyond his control. Foreign currency trapped national government will do anything to finance their development or war projects by turning coffee farms to anything that will provide foreign currency. Ethiopian government has no problem if all coffee farms are turned to *khat* fields as far as foreign exchange is acquired. Deforestation, pollution and *khat* production will be encouraged as the end justifies the means. Thus, Oromia’ natural in the era of globalization is very bleak to say the least. Government’s control of the land gives it free hand to allocate any hectare of land to its wishes and discourage farmers not to invest on land productivity.

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The Right to Self-Determination of Nation as Collective Human Right

Alemayehu Kumssa

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to examine the historical development of the idea of self-determination of nations as political and philosophical view in which a national group is entitled to decide how to be ruled, and in what kind of state it wants to live. The paper tries to map out the development of translating this humanistic idea to practice in different parts of the world especially in USA, France, and in Central and Eastern Europe. It examines United Nations' documents that deal with the question of Self-Determination of Nations and functions of some of UN organs that have responsibilities for protecting Human Rights by individual states. The paper also examines the function of African Commission for Human and Peoples Rights and the role of this organization concerning national liberation fronts. Finally, it will look at the impact of globalization on national liberation movements.

Historical Development of the Right of Self-Determination of Nation

The right to self-determination of nation was a result of a long struggle of nations that were under colonial rules. The United State is one of the first to apply self-determination the colonialist refused to accept the over rule of their former motherland and declared independence from Great Britain in 1776. The French Revolution of 1789 brought another type of Self – Determination of nation in which sovereignty was transformed from absolute monarch to the people. Political inequality of the French people that grouped them according to their social status from absolute monarch to the bottom of the society was destroyed and they all became equal citizens in the new law of the nation. The French revolution was a great blow for absolute monarchists in Europe and in other parts of the world with its slogans equality, freedom and fraternity (brotherhood).

World events have no linear development. The French republic faced military coup led by a young general, Napoleon Bonaparte, who came to power in 1795. He conquered almost all of Europe except England and Russia. Common alliance against Napoleon formed by Russia, Prussia, Sweden and Austria ended his hegemony near Leipzig in Germany. The Alliance power divided many countries between themselves, which brought two types of national movements: (1) integration movements such as Italian and Germans, and (2) National independent movement of nations under alien rule such as Polish, Hungarian, Czech and other 'stateless' nations of Central and Eastern Europe.

The victory of Napoleon Europe brought deep shock and humiliation in many nations. National humiliation of divided and weakened Italian kingdoms sought imaginary leaders to unify them under one state to protect their common territory from foreign intervention and build their culture. Revolutionary leaders like G. Garibaldi and Mazzini were Italian national leaders who unified Italy from 1861-1870. German people were federated from 39 different kingdoms to in 1871 to become one of the strongest states in Europe. Absolute monarch of Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina. Annexation of these territories angered Serbs, which was one of the causes of WWI. During the war, the new emerging superpower, the USA, dominant and supported the oppressed peoples who were struggling to regain their destroyed states (Czechs,

Polish, Hungarians, etc.) and others who do not have their own states in history but trying to build new ones (Belarus, Slovaks Moldavians, etc.).

The USA president, Woodrow Wilson, proposed his Fourteen Points plan in speech to USA Congress on 8 January 1918 for reconstructing a new Europe at the end of WWI¹. The Fourteen Points proposed by the president have many specific ideas such as to restore sovereignty of some occupied territories and the right of national self-determination of nation for others. These concrete projects were to help national liberation movements of oppressed peoples of Central and Eastern Europe to be free from imperial yokes of Austria-Hungary, Ottoman Turkey, czarist Russia and defeated Germany. Poland was again erected as independent state from divided territories of Prussian, Russia Austria. The Czechs and Slovaks found new state of Czechoslovakia and southern Slavs (Yugoslavia) and established common new state to escape imperial rules. The end of WWI and dismantling of imperial rules in order to build nation states on their ashes set an example for Asia and Africa on the following three points: (1) the unification of one nation, which was divided and ruled under different alien imperial rule like Poland, (2) the re-erection of old states like Czechs, Croatia, Hungary and others, and (3) establishment of new independent states that never existed before like Lithuania and Belarus.

Other parts of Fourteen Points were for reconstructing new Europe and for future world peace that lead to the establishment of League of Nations to avoid war³. The aim of the formation of League of Nations was “to promote international cooperation and to achieve peace and security”⁴. But this new organization was unable to keep peace in the World and the start of WWII was the beginning of its end. In 1945, the United Nations (UN) was established in San Francisco. My main point of focus in this analysis is the Charter and its main political covenants.

United Nations and the Question of the Right to Self-Determination of Nation

“We believe these fundamental things: First that every people have a right to choose the sovereignty under which they shall live...” Woodrow Wilson. Charter of UN declares, “To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace”⁵. Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted on 10 December 1948 by General Assembly of United Nations in its preamble affirms “recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family in the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.”⁶. The International Covenant on Civil and Political rights declares political right for all peoples as, “All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”

Economic right of peoples was also declared, “All peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic cooperation, based upon principle of mutual benefit, and international law, and in no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.”⁷. General Assembly of UN passed another resolution called the Declaration on Principles of International law concerning friendly relation and cooperation among nation on the possible outcome of an exercise of self-determination as “the establishment of a sovereign and independent state, the free association or integration with an independent state, or emergence into any other political status freely determined by a people.”

Who are the “People”?

The term “people” is not defined in international law. The problem is not the lack of definition but because the term is closely linked to sensitive political and legal issues in particular to “people’s” right of self-determination. To define the “people” it is better to divide criteria into objective and subjective characteristics. Objectively, peoples are described as a group of individual human beings who enjoy some or all of the following common features: (1) common historical tradition, (2) ethnic identity, (3) cultural homogeneity, (4) linguistic unity, religious or ideological affinity, (5) territorial connection and (6) common economic life. Subjectively the people group should possess the will or consciousness to be a people and institutions to express the identity of the people. This is widely regarded as being the ordinary meaning of the term “people”⁹. This international legal principle contained in the Vienna Convention on the Law of treaties and International Court of Justice asserts, “If the words in their natural and ordinary meaning make sense in their context, that is the end of the matter.”¹⁰

According to these objective and subjective criterias, “people” includes the definition of a nation. Alfred Cobban writes, “Central European nationalists have sought in vain in some invariable, positive, eternal symbol of differences of their nation’s one from the other. Language, religion, traditions, territorial contiguity, natural frontiers, economic interests, race - extensive exceptions can be found to every proposed test, except the subjective one. The best we can say is that any territorial community, the members of which are conscious of themselves as members of community, and wish to maintain the identity of their community, is a nation.”¹¹

However, national consciousness is very important to fight together for independence from alien rule and build national independent state of common origin, culture and language. Johann Herder, the father of cultural philosophy, asserts that culture is the unifying cement of members of the nation. He writes, “Culture as the relational attribute of a social group, indeed as hallmark of its existence as a group, in that it is the distinctive quality which is at once the product and the source of its shared activities, ideas, values, artifacts, and process, in short, its shared way of life over an inter-generational period of time”.¹² He asserts that culture helps to produce “a sense of collective identity in terms of which came to recognize not only united them with, but also what distinguish them from others”. This is also very important to understand political culture of one nation that has shared symbols and values, customs and norms of reciprocity. Political culture is embedded in the broader socio- political culture with which it interacts. For Herder, language is the core of culture, which constitutes the inescapable bedrock of social life.

A nation is a group of people who shares a significant number (but not necessarily all) of the following attributes: history, ethnic origin, religion, and political belief, fear of the same adversaries. In short, a nation may be defined as ‘community that is, or wishes to be, a state.’¹³. According to Prof. Miroslav Hroch, for a nation which is under alien rule, it will take a long struggle of three Phases of national movement to form independent state.

Phase A: The Period of Scholarly Interest is marked by a passionate concern on the part of a group of individuals usually intellectuals for the study of the language, the culture, the history of the oppressed nationality. Phase B: The Period of Patriotic Agitation is a period of the fermentation process of national consciousness, and Phase C: The Rise of a Mass National Movement¹⁴. When a national movement reaches Phase C, soon or later it will reach its own goal of forming a state through the participation majority of its members.

Different Types of Self-Determination of Nation

The principle of self-determination of nation has various components that can be applied to different situations differently. (1) External self-determination is the right of every people to choose sovereignty under which they want to live. The American independence is a good example. In their Declaration of Independence of 4 July 1776, the American Revolutionaries considered the British sovereignty over their territory as “unwarranted jurisdiction” and proclaimed: “When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary to one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with others, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the law of nature and of nature’s God entitled them, a decent respect to the opinion of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to separate...”¹⁵ and they denounced the British King as “a tyrant” who was unfit to be ruler of a “free people”. It was proclaimed further: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable Rights that among these are, life liberty and pursuit of happiness... that whenever any form of government become destructive to these ends it is the right of the people to alert or abolish it, and institute a new government...”¹⁶

Today, the Oromo nation and many other peoples are struggling to be free from foreign rule and build their own state on their fatherland, . that is completely independence from colonial rule of Abyssinia like Americans who freed themselves from British colonial rule. (2) Internal self-determination of Nation is the right of every people to select its own form of government. One of the articles of Universal Declaration of political rights affirms that “the will of the people shall be the bases of authority of government shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.”¹⁷ This article politely puts the power of decision making in the hands of the governed. There are many constitutions which clearly elaborate the definition of the right of internal-self determination. The Irish Constitution, for example, states, “The Irish nation hereby affirms its unalienable, indefeasible, and sovereign its own form of Government, to determine its relation with other nations, and to develop its life, political, economical and cultural, in accordance with its genius and tradition.”¹⁸ There are three varieties of internal self determination: democracy in a homogeneous state (e.g., Holland), autonomous or federalism for distinct people within a democratic state (the Québécois and the Intuit in Canada) or autonomy/federalism for a distinct group within a non democratic system (e.g., Kurds in Iraq, or Hong Kong in post-1997 communist China).¹⁹

In many different cases external and internal self-determination of nation are completely interwoven and cannot be separated. For example, the choice given to Puerto Rico since 1960s involved both external and internal self-determination (independence or no independence) and internal self-determination (statehood or associated status). There are other kinds of self-determinations different from political self-determination such as “cultural self-determination” the right to teach and study in one’s own language, to develop an autonomous culture and to resist assimilation by a dominant power.²⁰ There is also crucial distinction between anti-colonial self-determination that is liberation of colonized people from colonial rule. For example, the Oromo national liberation struggle to be free from Abyssinian rule and to form Oromia state. Secessionist self-determination represents a people’s aspiration to break away a state and achieve liberation like the Yoruba national movement in Nigeria, Ache Liberation movement in Indonesia, Tamil National movement in Sri Lanka and etc.

The Relation Between Self-Determination and Human Rights

The first initiative to define self-determination as a human right came from the delegation of the Soviet Union during the preparation of the draft articles of Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The delegation suggested the adoption of the following draft: "Every people and every nation have the right to national self-determination. States which have the responsibilities for the administration of the non self-governing territories, including colonies, shall promote the fulfillment of this right, guided by the aims and principles of the UN in relations to the peoples of such territories."²¹ The proposal was not accepted, but on 10 December 1948, when the General Assembly Adopted the Universal Declaration, the core ideas of the proposal were assimilated in the declaration like the proposal of Revolutionary leader V. I. Lenin who demanded all social democrats to fight for self-determination of Nations of oppressed peoples in 1915²² supporting the independence of Poland like K. Marx supported the Independency of Ireland in 1869. Lenin's idea of was also accepted and applied after three years by president W. Wilson as part of his Fourteen Points for the reconstruction of new Europe.

Even if the above declaration does not make explicit reference to the term self-determination, as perceived by the Western countries it is adequately reflected therein. For example, the declaration reaffirms the philosophical viewpoint that human beings are born free and equal in dignity and right (Article 1), and entitled to enjoy all the fundamental rights and freedom, "without distinction of any kind"(Article 2). It recognizes basic freedoms such as those related to "thought"(Article 18), "opinion of expression" (Article 19), "assembly and association" (Article 20), to own property alone as well as in association with others, (Article 17), the right to a nationality (Article 15), to participate in cultural life of community" (Article 27), to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives, to equal access to public service in the country. Paragraph three of article 21 declares that: "The will of the people shall be the bases of the authority of government; this shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures."²³

UN Assembly adopted many resolutions, which have paragraphs to the right of self-determination, that granting of independence to colonial countries and people on 14 December 1960. "All peoples have the right to self – determination; by the virtue of the right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development."²⁴ This declaration also put obligation on states which are colonial powers and have Trust territories in these clear messages," Including those having responsibility for administration of non self-government and trust territories and those controlling in whatsoever the exercise of that right of the people to promote the realization of that right in all their territories."²⁵ If these colonial powers did not abide by these resolutions and the possibilities of peaceful solution was not found, a colonized people have a legitimate right to use force against occupants to get their independence, and the General Assembly had repeatedly reaffirmed the legitimacy of the use of force by liberation movements under certain conditions.²⁶ For peace loving states, it was also a positive legal obligation to assist people struggling against colonial domination because conflicts resulting from the struggle of the peoples against colonial and alien domination are not civil wars but international armed conflicts. States are not bound by the duty of non-intervention in the conflict. On the contrary, this is a positive legal obligation to assist a people struggling against colonial domination.²⁷ Also, other UN anti-discrimination declarations have been formulated.²⁸

Instruments of Human Rights' Regime

“International regimes are defined as principles, norms, rules and decision making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issues-areas.”²⁹ Therefore, international regimes shall be defined as “norms and decision making procedures accepted by international actors to regulate an issue-area.”³⁰ If we come to Human Right Regime, the basic elements are three interrelated features based on: (1) the constitutive human right agreements, (2) The role of self-determination and democratic principles that were central to the framework of de-colonization and (3) The recent recognition of the rights of minority groups. To apply the three Declarations of Human Rights, there are international, regional and national organs of human rights organizations.

The Human Rights Committee

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Adopted by UN General Assembly on December 1966 established a Human Rights Committee which consists of eighteen members. Member states have obligation to submit reports on the measures they adopted which give effect to the rights recognized herein and on the progress made in the enjoyment of those rights. But we must keep in mind that we are living in state system in which some part of the world where the governments are butchering their own citizens. May be the third wave of democratization gradually will push them away from the face of political leadership.

There are two optimisms in the functions of this committee: (1) if one state is not fulfilling its obligation under this covenant other state may communicate it's complain to the committee to bring the situation in the country to attention, and (2) under the optional protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Individuals advocates exposition as “Any individual who claim to be victim of a violation by the state party of any of the right set forth in the Covenant”³¹. This is the best window in UN system that gives right to individuals to expose Human Rights violation on international forum.

The Commission of Human Rights

UN established the Human Rights Commission in 1945 to promote and protect human rights. The commission provides over all policy guidance, studies human rights problems, develops new international norms and monitors the observance of human rights around the world. It is a principal intergovernmental policy making body for human rights at the UN and is authorized to discuss human rights situation anywhere in the world and to examine information from states, non-governmental organizations and other sources³². The Commission is a body of states' representative, not independent experts. Because of this, they are instructed political delegations of their governments. Some of them could be the representatives of one of the states that grossly violate human rights. The weakness of the Commission is often criticized. They are many regional human rights organizations including European Human Rights Commission, The Inter-American Commission of Human Right, Arab Commission of Human Rights and African Commission on Human and Peoples Right.

African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) adopted a resolution on 27 June 1981 on Human and Peoples' Rights. The OAU reaffirms as the aim of the commission to eradicate any forms of colonialism from Africa, to coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa and to promote international cooperation having

due regard to the charter of UN and the Declaration of Human Rights.”³³ The Charter in its Article 20 declares the right to self-determination of people, and the colonized or oppressed shall have the right to free themselves from the bond of domination by resorting to any means recognized by the international community. More than that, the Charter proclaims that colonized or oppressed peoples have the right to get support from the member states of the charter in their liberation struggle against foreign domination, be it political or cultural. The Charter also established an African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights. The Commission consist eleven members who shall serve at their personal capacity. Members of the commission shall be elected by secret ballot by Heads of States and government of organization of African Unity.

The African Court on Human and Peoples Rights

The African court on Human and Peoples’ Rights was recently established to decide on all cases and disputes submitted to it concerning the interpretation and application of the Charter, the protocol and any other relevant Human Rights’ instruments ratified by the states concerned. The formation of African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights and The African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights in Africa are indicators how to control human right violation in the continent. But a basic question is its applicability when many countries are under African dictators. History of national liberation fronts and peace and freedom loving peoples’ movements in the world indicate that the live of oppressors are shortening very rapidly.

Globalization and the Question of National Liberation Fronts

Globalization is new word with different meanings. Anthony Giddens explains facts about globalization starting from 1960s as: (1) The world–wide communications that was made possible due to presence of satellite for instantaneous communications from any part of the world, (2) The big change from industrial economy to ‘weightless economy’ that is financial economy. Globalization refers to transformation happening on the level of everyday life. One of the biggest changes of the past thirty years is the growing equality between women and men, a trend that is also worldwide, even if it still has a long way to go³⁴. These four main transformations of communication technology, electronic economy, disintegration of Russian-Soviet Empire and the process of equality between women and men are the key globalization engines.

Indian Professor Vandana Shiva, a physicist and ecologist and a recipient of Nobel Price award, defines globalization is from the perspective of the poor south. “Globalization is not merely a geographic phenomenon which is tearing down national barriers to capital. Globalization is also tearing down ethical and ecological limits on commerce. As every thing is for sale, genes, cells, plants, seeds, knowledge, water even pollution. Life has lost its sanctity, as living systems become the new raw material, the new site of investment, the new locations for investment, and the new location for manufacture. Pollution and waste have also become a source of multi-million trades. Instead of getting rid of pollution, systems are being evolved which allow the rich to sell their pollution to the poor. The poor are thus being doubly denied their right to life first when the resources that sustain them are taken away from them in a free trade world, and then when the pollution and waste of the global economy are unequally and unjustly piled on them.”³⁵ This view is more important for a people who are not the master of their country; because irresponsible governments of poor countries may trade with these dangerous pollutions and wastes, which are not only have devastating effects on this and future generation. Another author asserts that, “globalization has been viewed as an ideological justification of the deployment of neo-liberal policies privileging corporate rights.”³⁶ For other

author like Professor Immanuel Wallerstein world economic system had been integrating for many centuries. It may be said that economic integration already undergone at least for five centuries. According to this view economic globalization is a new name with old contents. Self-determination of nations significantly increased in these integration processes. In 1860, there were only 37 independent states whereas in 1990 there were 192.³⁷

Independent states are the result of great long struggles of oppressed nations against colonial occupations from Latin America, Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa. During the struggles for independence, all colonial powers and their puppet states did not supported the UN resolutions for decolonization. But Asian, Latin Americans and Africans supported each others in the UN General Assemblies to pass key UN resolutions to destroy the colonial rule. Political maps show that different national movements eradicated empires and built states on their graves. The aspiration and struggle of the Oromo nation is not different from these global movements. The Oromos want to be the owner of their own country and rebuild their democratic state in the spirit of their famous Gada system.

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The Kushitic / Meroitic Origins of the Oromo Nation

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Mr. Chairman, Beloved Oromo Friends, Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to first apologize for being unable to attend this great conference and take advantage of your valuable contributions and interaction. My subject starts with a fast survey of an entire field of Humanities, namely the Meroitic Studies, which has not yet attracted much attention from Oromo colleagues, although it focalizes on a land neighboring Biyya Oromo.

1. The development of the Meroitic Studies, the History of Kush and Meroe, and the Efforts to Decipher the Meroitic Scripture

Interest in what was Ethiopia for the Ancient Greeks and Romans, i.e. the Northern territory of present day Sudan from Khartoum to the Egyptian border, led to the gradual development of a modern discipline of Humanities that long stood in the shadow of Egyptology: the Meroitic Studies. From the explorative trips of the Prussian pioneering Egyptologist Richard Lepsius (1842 – 1844) that bestowed upon modern scholarship the voluminous 'Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien' (Monuments from Egypt and Ethiopia) and the excavations of E. A. Wallis Budge and John Garstang at Meroe (modern Bagrawiyah, in the first years of the 20th century) to the excavations of Francis Llewellyn Griffith at Kawa (ancient Gematon, near modern Dongola, 1929 – 1931), the Fritz Hintze excavations at Musawwarat es Sufra, the Jean Leclant excavations at Sulb (Soleb), Sadinga (Sedeinga), and Djebel Barkal (ancient Napata, modern Karima) in the 50s and the 60s, the D. Wildung excavations at Naqah, and the Charles Bonnet excavations at Kerma, a very considerable advance in academic research and knowledge took place. The pertinent explorations and contributions of scholars like A. J. Arkell, P. L. Shinnie and Laszlo Torok that cover a span of 80 years reconstituted a large part of the greatness and splendor of this 4-millennium long African civilization.

Yet, lacking direct access to original sources and genuine understanding of the Ancient History of the Sudan, i.e. the legendary Ethiopia of the Greeks and Romans, which corresponds to what was 'Kush' of the Biblical Hebrews and ultimately 'Kas' for the Ancient Egyptians. We face a serious problem of terminology, being confined to terms such as Period (or Group) A (3100 – 2700 BCE), Period B (2700 – 2300 BCE) that starts with Pharaoh Snefru's expedition and the beginning of time honored enmity between Egypt and Kush, Period C (2300 – 2100 BCE), when we have no idea to what specific ethnic or state structures the various Egyptian names Wawat, Irtet, Setjiu, Yam, Zetjau, and Medjay refer, Period Kerma (2100 – 1500 BCE), named after the modern city and archeological site, 500 km in the south of the present Sudanese – Egyptian border. What we know for sure is that, when the first Pharaohs of the New Empire invaded and colonized the entire area down to Kurgus (more than 1000 km alongside the Nile in the south of the present Sudanese–Egyptian border), they established two top Egyptian administrative positions, namely 'Viceroy of Wawat' and 'Viceroy of Kush/Kas', and in that case Wawat is the area between Aswan and Abu Simbel (so properly speaking between the first and the second cataracts), whereas Kas is all the land that lies beyond. With the collapse of the Kerma culture comes to end a first high-level culture and state in the area of Kush.

We employ the term 'Kushitic Period' for what comes next, involving (a) the Egyptian annexation (1500 – 950 BCE) that was followed by a permanent effort of egyptianization of Kush and by ceaseless Kushitic revolutions against the Pharaohs, (b) the Kushitic independence (950 – 800 BCE), when a state was formed around Napata, present day Karima, 750 km in the

south of the Sudanese–Egyptian border, (c) the Kushitic expansion and involvement in Egypt (800 – 670 BCE), which corresponds mostly to the XXVth - ‘Ethiopian’ according to Manetho - dynasty of Egypt, when the Theban clergy of Amun made an alliance with the Kushitic ‘Qore’ – Kings of Napata, who had two capitals, Napata and Thebes), and (d) the Kushitic expulsion from Egypt following the three successive invasions of Egypt by Emperors Assarhaddon, 671 BCE, and Assurbanipal, 669 and 666 BCE, of Assyria, who made an alliance with the Heliopolitan priesthood and Libyan princes against the Theban clergy and the Kushitic kings and gradual decline (following the invasions by Psamtik/Psammetichus II, 591 BCE, and the Achaemidian Persian Shah Kambudjiyah/Cambyses, 525 BCE) until the transfer of the capital far in the south at Meroe, at the area of present day Bagrawiyah (at the end of the reign of Qore Nastasen, 335 – 315 BCE).

We call ‘Meroitic’ the entire period that covers almost 700 years from the successors of Nastasen (Arkamaniqo/Ergamenes, around 260 BCE, was the most illustrious among the earliest ones, and the first to be buried at Meroe/Bagrawiyah) down to the end of Meroe, and the destruction of the Meroitic royal cities by the Axumite Abyssinian Negus Ezana (370 CE). It is easily understood that ‘Kushitic’ antedates ‘Meroitic’, but the appellations are quite conventional.

The Ancient people of Kush (or Ethiopia) entered into a period of cultural and scriptural radiation and authenticity relatively late, around the 3rd century BCE, which means that the development took place when Meroe replaced Napata as capital of the Kushites/Meroites. Before that moment, they used Egyptian Hieroglyphic scripture for all purposes of writing, administrative, economic, religious and/or royal. The introduction of the Meroitic alphabetic hieroglyphic writing spearheaded the development of a Meroitic cursive alphabetic scripture that was used for less magnificent purposes than palatial and sacred relief inscriptions. The first person to publish Meroitic inscriptions was the French architect Gau, who visited Northern Sudan in 1819. Quite unfortunately, almost two centuries after the discovery we risk being left in mysteries with regard to the contents of the epigraphic evidence collected in both scriptural systems.

The earliest dated Meroitic hieroglyphic inscriptions belong to the reign of the ruling queen Shanakdakheto (about 177-155 BCE), but archaeologists believe that this scripture represents the later phase of a language spoken by Kushites/Meroites at least as far back as 750 BCE and possibly many centuries before that (hinting at a Kushitic continuity from the earliest Kerma days). The earliest examples of Meroitic cursive inscriptions, recently found by Charles Bonnet in Dukki Gel (REM 1377-78), can be dated from the early second century BCE. The latest text is still probably the famous inscription from Kalabsha mentioning King Kharamadoye (REM 0094) and dated from the beginning of the 5th century AD, although some funeral texts from Ballana could be contemporary if not posterior.

Despite the fact that F.L. Griffith has identified the 23 Meroitic alphabetic scripture’s signs already in 1909, not much progress has been made towards an ultimate decipherment of the Meroitic. Scarcity of epigraphic evidence plays a certain role in this regard since as late as the year 2000 we were not able to accumulate more than 1278 texts. If we now add to that the lack of lengthy texts, the lack of any bilingual text (not necessarily Egyptian /Meroitic, it could be Ancient Greek/Meroitic, if we take into consideration that Arkamaniqo/Ergamenes was well versed in Greek), and a certain lack of academic vision, we understand why the state of our knowledge about the History of the Meroites is still so limited.

Linguistics and parallels from other languages have been repeatedly set in motion in order to help the academic research. Griffith and Haycock tried to read Meroitic using (modern) Nubian. K.H. Priese tried to read the Meroitic text using Eastern Sudanese (Beja or Hadendawa); and F. Hintze, attempted to compare Meroitic with the Ural-Altaiic group. Recently Siegbert Hummel, compared the "known" Meroitic words to words in the Altaic family which he believed was a substrate language of Meroitic. At times, scholars (like Clyde Winters) were driven to farfetched interpretations, attempting to equate Meroitic with Tokharian, after assuming a possible relationship between the name Kush and the name Kushan of an Eastern Iranian state (of the late Arsacid, 250 BCE – 224 CE, and early Sassanid, 224 – 651 CE, times). However, one must state that the bulk of the researchers working on the Meroitic language do not believe that it was a member of the Afro-Asiatic group.

So far, the only Meroitic words for which a solid translation had been given by Griffith and his successors are the following: man, woman, meat, bread, water, give, big, abundant, good, sister, brother, wife, mother, child, begotten, born, feet. The eventual equivalence between Egyptian and Meroitic texts was a strong motivation for any interpretational approach, recent or not. More recent, but still dubious, suggestions are the following: arohe- «protect», hr- «eat», pwrite «life», yer «milk», ar «boy», are- or dm- «take, receive», dime «cow», hlbi «bull», ns(e) «sacrifice, sdk «journey», tke- «love, revere», we «dog». It is clear that vocalization remains a real problem. Through the aforementioned we realize why collective works, like *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum*, the *Textual Sources for the History of the Middle Nile Region* (vols. I – IV, edited by T. Eide, T. Hägg, R.H. Pierce, and L. Török, University of Bergen, Bergen 1994; 1996; 1998 and 2000), are still seminal for our, unfortunately indirect, as based on Ancient Egyptian, Greek, Latin and Coptic texts knowledge of Meroe.

2. The End of Meroe

Amidst numerous unclear points of the Kushitic/Meroitic History, the end of Meroe, and the consequences of this event remain the most controversial point among scholars. Quite indicatively, we may mention here the main efforts of historical reconstitution. (a) Arkell, Sayce and others asserted that Meroe was captured and destroyed, following one military expedition led by Ezana of Axum, (b) Reisner insisted that, after Ezana's invasion and victory, Meroe remained a state with another dynasty tributary to Axum, (c) Monneret de Villard and Hintze affirmed that Meroe was totally destroyed before Ezana's invasion, due to an earlier Axumite Abyssinian raid, (d) Torok, Shinnie, Kirwan, Haegg and others concluded that Meroe was defeated by a predecessor of Ezana, and continued existing as a vassal state, and (e) Bechhaus–Gerst specified that Meroe was invaded prior to Ezana's raid, and that the Axumite invasion did not reach lands further in the north of Meroe.

With two fragmentary inscriptions from Meroe and one from Axum, with two graffitos from Kawa and Meroe, and with one coin being all the evidence we have so far, and with the Inscription of Ezana (DAE 11, the 'monotheistic' inscription in vocalized Gueze) remaining a somewhat controversial historical source, we have little to reconstruct the details that led to the collapse of Meroe. The legendary *Monumentum Adulitanum*, lost but copied in a confused way by Cosmas Indicopleustes, may not shed light at all on this event. One point is sure that there was never a generalized massacre of the Meroitic inhabitants of the lands conquered by Ezana. The aforementioned DAE 11 inscription mentions just 758 Meroites killed by the Axumite forces. What is even more difficult to comprehend is the reason behind the scarcity of population attested on Meroitic lands in the aftermath of Ezana's raid. The post-Meroitic and pre-Christian,

transitional phase of Sudan's history is called X-Group or period, or Ballana Period and this is again due to lack of historical insight. Contrary to what happened for many centuries of Meroitic History, when the Meroitic South (the area between Shendi and Atbara in modern Sudan with the entire hinterland of Butana that was called *Insula Meroe/Nesos Meroe*, i.e. Island Meroe in the Antiquity) was overpopulated when compared to the Meroitic North (from Napata/Karima to the area between Aswan and Abu Simbel that was called *Triakontaschoinos* and was divided between Meroe and the Roman Empire), during the X-Group times the previously underpopulated area gives the impression of a more densely peopled region, when compared to the previous center of Meroitic power and population density. The new situation is in striking difference with earlier descriptions and narrations by Dio Cassius and Strabo.

The name 'Ballana period' is quite indicative in this regard. Ballana being on Egyptian soil, whereas not far in the south of the present Sudanese–Egyptian border lies Karanog with its famous tumuli that bear evidence of Nubian upper hand in terms of social anthropology. The southernmost counterpart of Karanog culture can be found in Tangassi (nearby Karima, which represented the 'North' for what was the center of Meroitic power gravitation). In addition, in terms of culture, X-Group heralds a total break with the Meroitic tradition, with the Nubians and the Blemmyes/Beja outnumbering the Meroitic remnants and imposing a completely different cultural and socio-anthropological milieu out of which would later emanate the first and single Nubian state in the World History, the Nobatia.

Much confusion characterized modern scholars referring to Kush or Meroe by using the modern term 'Nubia'. By now it is clear that the Nubians lived since times immemorial in both Egypt and the Sudan, being part of the history of these two lands. But Nubians are a Nilo-Saharan ethnic / linguistic group different from the Khammitic Kushites/Meroites. At the times of X-Group and during the long centuries of Christian Sudan, we have the opportunity to attest the differences and divergence between the Nubians and the Meroitic remnants. The epicenter of Nubian center, the area between the first (Aswan) and the third (Kerma) cataracts, rose to independence and prominence first, with capital at Faras, nearby the present day Sudanese – Egyptian border, around 450 CE. Nobatia institutionalized Coptic Christian religion and administrative language, and Nubian language remained an oral only vehicle of communication. The Nobatian control in the south of the third cataract was vague, nominal and precarious. Nobatia was linked with the Coptic–Monophysitic Patriarchate of Alexandria.

The Meroitic remnants underscored their difference from the Nubians/Nobatians, and the depopulated central part of the defunct state of Meroe rose to independence in the first decades of the sixth century. Its name, Makkurria, is a linguistic resemblance of the name 'Meroe' but we know nothing more. The Meroitic remnants inhabited the northern circumference of Makkuria more densely, and the gravitation center turns around Old Dongola (580 km in the south of Wadi Halfa), capital of this Christian Orthodox state that extended from Kerma to Shendi (the area of the sixth cataract), so for more than 1000 km alongside the Nile. But beyond the area of Karima (750 km in the south of Wadi Halfa) and the nearby famous Al Ghazali monastery we have very scarce evidence of Christian antiquities. The old African metropolis Meroe remained at the periphery of Makkuria, Alodia and Axumite Abyssinia.

Makkurians highlighted their ideological and religious divergence from the Nubians, and adopted Greek as religious language. They even introduced a new scripture for their Makkurian language that seems to be a later phase of Meroitic. Makkurian was written in alphabetic Greek signs, and the Makkurians preferred to attach themselves to Christian Orthodoxy, and more particularly to the Greek Patriarchate of Alexandria.

Alodia has long been called the 'third Christian state' in Sudan, but recent discoveries in Soba, its capital (15 km at the east of Khartoum), suggest that Alodia rose first to independence (around 500 CE) and later adhered to Christianity (around 580–600 CE) following evangelization efforts deployed by Nobatian priests (possibly in a sort of anti-Makkurian religious diplomacy). We know nothing of an Alodian scripture so far.

The later phases of Christian History of Sudan encompass the Nobatian–Makkurian merge (around 1000 CE), the islamization of Makkuria in 1317, and finally the late collapse of Christian Alodia in 1505. Many questions remain unanswered until today. What happened to the bulk of the Meroitic population, the inhabitants of the Insula Meroe, the present day Butana? What occurred to the Meroites living between the fourth and the sixth cataracts after the presumably brief raid of Ezana of Axum, and the subsequent destruction of Meroe, Mussawarat es Sufra, Naqah, Wad ben Naqah and Basa?

3. Reconstruction of the Post-Meroitic History of the Kushitic Oromo Nation

Certainly, the motives of Ezana's raid have not yet been properly studied and assessed by modern scholarship; and yet this point could shed more light into this issue. The reasons could be a simple nationalistic usurpation of the name of 'Ethiopia' (Kush), which would give Christian eschatological legitimacy to the Axumite Abyssinian kingdom, to the end of 4th century international politics and the eventuality of an Iranian–Meroitic alliance at the times of Shapur II (310 – 379), which could actually be a time honored Meroitic diplomatic tradition (diffusion of Mithraism as attested on the Jebel Qeili reliefs of Shorakaror) or some others. What we can be sure of are the absence of a large scale massacre, and the characteristic scarcity of population in the central Meroitic provinces during the period that followed Ezana's raid. The only plausible explanation is that the scarcity of population in Meroe mainland after Meroe's destruction is due to the fact that the Meroites in their outright majority (at least for the inhabitants of Meroe's southern provinces) fled and migrated to areas where they would stay independent from the Semitic Christian kingdom of Axumite Abyssinia. This explanation may sound quite a fresh approach, but it may not be true since it is inconsistent in the best utilization of the already existing data. From archeological evidence, it becomes clear that during X-Group phase and throughout the Makkurian period the former heartland of Meroe remained mostly uninhabited. The end of Meroe was definitely sudden and abrupt. But where did the go?

There is no evidence of Meroites sailing the Nile downwards to the area of the 4th (Karima) and the 3rd (Kerma) cataracts, which was the northern circumference of Meroe and remained untouched by Ezana. There is no textual evidence in Greek, Latin and/or Coptic to testify to such a migratory movement or to hint at an even more incredible direction, i.e. Christian Roman Egypt. If we add to this the impossibility of marching to the heartland of the invading Axumites (an act that would mean a new war), we reduce the options to relatively few speculations.

The migrating Meroites could go either to the vast areas of the Eastern and the Western deserts or enter the African jungle or ultimately search a possibly free land that, being arable and good for pasture, would keep them far from the Christian Axumites. It would be very erroneous to expect settled people to move to the desert, and in addition, it would be a unique oxymoron in the History of the Mankind. Nomadic peoples move from the steppes, the savannas and deserts to fertile lands, and they settle there, or cross long distances through steppes and deserts, but settled people move to other lands that offer possibility for cultivation and pasture.

When dispersed by the invading Sea Peoples, the Hittites moved from Anatolia to Northwestern Mesopotamia, they did not cross and stay in the desert of Anatolia. The few scholars who think that Meroitic continuity can be found among the present day Beja and Hadendawa are oblivious of the aforementioned reality of the World History that was never contravened. In addition, the Blemmyes were never friendly to the Meroites, every now and then they attacked parts of the Nile valley, and the Meroites had to repulse them thence, so it would rather be incredible for the Meroitic population, after seeing Meroe sacked, to move to a land where life would be difficult and enemies would wait for them.

Modern technologies help historians and archeologists reconstruct better the Ancient World; paleo-botanists, geologists, geo-chemists, paleontomologists, and other specialized natural scientists are of great help in this regard. It is essential to stress here that the entire environmental milieu of the Sudan was very different during the times of the Late Antiquity we examine in our approach. Butana may look like a wasteland nowadays, the Pyramids of Bagrawiyah are sunk in the sand, and Mussawarat es Sufra and Naqah demand a real effort in crossing the desert. But in the first centuries of Christian Era, the entire landscape was dramatically different.

The Butana was not a desert but a fertile cultivated land; we have actually found remains of reservoirs, aqueducts, various hydraulic installations, irrigation systems and canals in Meroe and elsewhere. Not far from Mussawarat es Sufra there must have been an enclosure where captive elephants were trained before being transported to Ptolemais Theron (present day Suakin, 50 km in the south of Port Sudan) and then further on to Alexandria. Desert was in the vicinity, certainly, but not that close. We should not imagine that Ezana crossed the desert from the area of Agordat, Tesseney and Kessala to Atbarah and Bagrawiyah, as we would do today and we should not imagine the lands in the south of present day Khartoum, alongside the White Nile, easy to cross. Impenetrable jungle started in the Antiquity immediately in the south of Khartoum, and cities like Kosti and Jabalayn lie today on deforested soil. At the southernmost confines of the Meroitic state, pasturelands and arableland could be found alongside the Blue Nile.

Since jungle signified death in the Antiquity, and even armies feared to stay overnight in a forest or even more so in the African jungle, we have good reason to believe that, following the Ezana's raid, the Meroites, rejecting the perspective of forced christening, migrated southwestwards up to Khartoum, and then southeastwards alongside the Blue Nile in a direction that would keep them safe and far from the Axumite Abyssinians whose state did not expand as far in the south as Gondar and Tana lake. Proceeding in this way and crossing successively areas of modern cities, such as Wad Madani, Sennar, Damazin, and Asosa, and from there on they expanded in later times over the various parts of Biyya Oromo.

We do not imply that the migration was completed in the span of one lifetime; quite contrarily, we have reasons to believe that the establishment of Alodia (or Alwa) is due to the progressive waves of Meroitic migrants who settled first in the area of Khartoum that was out of the westernmost confines of the Meroitic state. Only when the Christianization became a matter of concern for the evangelizing Nobatians, and the two Christian Sudanese states were already strong, the chances of preserving the pre-Christian Meroitic cultural heritage in the area around Soba were poor, and then another wave of migrations took place, with early Alodian Meroites proceeding as far in the south as Damazin and Asosa, areas that remained always beyond the southern border of Alodia (presumably around Sennar). Like this, the second migratory Meroitic

wave may have entered around 600 CE in the area where the Oromos, descendents of the migrated Meroites, still live today.

A great number of changes at the cultural and behavioral levels are to be expected, when a settled people migrates to faraway lands. The Phoenicians had kings in Tyre, Byblos and their other cities–states, but introduced a democratic system when they sailed far and colonized various parts of the Mediterranean. The collapse of the Meroitic royalty was a shock for the Nile valley; the Christian kingdoms of Nobatia, Makkuria and Alodia were ruled by kings whose power was to great extent counterbalanced by that of the Christian clergy. With the Meroitic royal family decimated by Ezana, it is quite possible that high priests of Apedemak and Amani (Amun) took much of the administrative responsibility in their hands, inciting people to migrate and establishing a form of collective and representative authority among the Meroitic Elders. They may even have preserved the royal title of Qore within completely different socio-anthropological context.

4. Call for Comparative Meroitic–Oromo Studies

How can this approach, interpretation and conclusion be corroborated up to the point of becoming generally accepted at the academic level? On what axes should one group work to collect detailed documentation in support of the Meroitic ancestry of the Oromos?

Quite strangely, I would not give priority to the linguistic approach. The continuity of a language can prove many things and can prove nothing. The Bulgarians are of Uralo-Altaic Turco-Mongolian origin but, after they settled in Eastern Balkans, they were linguistically slavized. Most of the Greeks are Albanians, Slavs, and Vlachians, who were hellenized linguistically. Most of the Turks in Turkey are Greeks and Anatolians, who were turkicized linguistically. A people can preserve its own language in various degrees and forms. For the case of languages preserved throughout millennia, we notice tremendous changes and differences. If you pick up Plato and 'transfer' him at the times of Linear B that was written in Mycenae 800 years before the Greek philosopher lived, you can be sure that Plato would not understand the language of his ancestors with the exception of some words. Egyptian Hieroglyphics was a scripture that favored archaism and linguistic puritanism. But we can be sure that for later Pharaohs, like Taharqa the Kushite (the most illustrious ruler of the 'Ethiopian' dynasty), Psamtik, Nechao, Ptolemy II and Cleopatra VII, a Pyramid text (that antedated them by 1700 to 2300 years) would almost be incomprehensible.

A. National diachronic continuity is better attested and more markedly noticed in terms of Culture, Religion and Philosophical–Behavioral system. The first circle of comparative research would encompass the world of the Kushitic–Meroitic and Oromo concepts, anything that relates to the *Weltanschauung* of the two cultural units/groups under study. A common view of basic themes of Life and a common perception of the World would bring a significant corroboration of the Meroitic ancestry of the Oromos. So, first it is a matter of History of Religions, African Philosophy, Social Anthropology, Ethnography and Culture History.

B. Archeological research can help tremendously too. At this point one has to stress the reality that the critical area the reconstruction suggested has been totally indifferent for Egyptologists, Meroitic and Axumite archeologists. The Blue Nile valley in the Sudan and Abyssinia was never the subject of an archeological survey, and the same is true to the Oromo highlands. Certainly modern archeologists prefer something concrete that would lead them to a great discovery, being therefore very different from the pioneering 19th century archeologists. An archeological study would be necessary in the Blue Nile valley and the Oromo highlands in the years to come.

C. A linguistic epigraphic approach may have even more spectacular results. It could eventually end up with a complete decipherment of the Meroitic and the Makkurian. An effort must be made to read the Meroitic texts, hieroglyphic and cursive, with the help of Oromo language. Meroitic personal names, and toponymics must be studied in the light of a potential Oromo interpretation. Comparative linguistics may unveil affinities that will lead to reconsideration of the work done so far in the Meroitic decipherment.

D. Last but not least, another dimension would be added to the project with the initiation of comparative anthropological studies. Data extracted from findings in the Meroitic cemeteries must be compared with data provided by the anthropological study of present day Oromos. The research must encompass pictorial documentation from the various Meroitic temples' bas-reliefs. To all these, I would add a better reassessment of the existing historical sources, but this is not a critical dimension of this research project.

With that I reached the end of my presentation, certainly too long and impossible to be further abridged. I believe my call for Comparative Meroitic–Oromo Studies reached the correct audience that can truly evaluate the significance of the ultimate inclusion of the Meroitic Ancestry of the Oromos, as well as the magnificent consequences such incorporation would have in view of (a) the forthcoming Kushitic Palingenesia–Renaissance in Africa and (b) the establishment of a Post–Colonial African Historiography.

Thank you.

Oromo Studies Association XX Annual Conference

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Ethnic Blinders Versus Civic Autonomy in Ethiopia

Abdi Samatar

In the 1990s in Africa, two sharply contrasting models of state-society relations and the role of ethnicity in national affairs have emerged: namely ethnic and civic. The first is what we call the /ethnic road/ to political reconstruction. This approach deems ethnicity as the over-riding form of identity among the population that cannot be ignored in public affairs. Proponents argue that ethnicity has been a central factor in public life, usually since a particular ethnic group colonized the state and subjugated other communities. In such circumstance, the dominant group denied the importance of the ethnic factor and castigated dissident communities for being sectarian. Thus, ethnicity must be acknowledged as a central factor in a country's political process.

In contrast, the /civic road/ to reconstruction differentiates between two types of ethnic identities. First, there exists a non-state centric tradition based on shared values that are not legally defined. An alternative to such identity is one sanctioned by the state and which is therefore enforceable. Recognizing these two identity forms create the opportunity to overcome the dilemma posed by the Ethiopian case. Thus, to acknowledge the first form of ethnicity does not necessarily mean to endorse the second. Distinguishing these identity variants is necessary but insufficient to understand how old cultural traditions became political instruments of the state. To grasp the origins and nature of cultural identity's metamorphosis one needs to re-examine colonial state formation in Africa.

What futures do these contrasting frameworks offer to the Ethiopian people in particular and those in the region in general?

A Comparative Welfare Analysis of Ethiopian Regions: The Case of Oromiya

Abebe Adugna

The 1994 Ethiopian Constitution formally established a federal government structure, whereby Oromiya was delineated as one of the 11 main states in Ethiopia. Although federalism exists only notionally, with much political power and policy decision making still retained at the center, the establishment of the concept of federalism has allowed for collection of some basic regional economic statistics in Ethiopia. This paper uses such regional data to undertake a comparative welfare analysis of the four main regions: Oromiya, Amhara, SNNP, and Tigray that accounting for over 85 percent of the total population of Ethiopia.

The evidence shows that there are indeed significant disparities in access to health and education services across these regions. Relative to the other regions, Oromiya has the worst access to health care and education services. It has the highest infant and child mortality rate, and the lowest access to child immunization. Oromiya has the lowest percentage of households with bed nets against malaria. Its population to physician ratio is nearly three times larger than that of Tigray. In education, Oromiya has a slightly higher primary school enrollment ratio than Amhara, but lower enrollment ratio than Tigray and SNNP. In secondary school enrollment, Tigray's enrollment ratio (25 percent) is more than twice that of Oromiya (11.6 percent), a progress that has been achieved largely over the last decade.

Revisiting and Reviving Baro Tumsa's Organizational Model

Addisu Tolesa

The Oromo Liberation movement has gone through developmental stages. One of the high marks, I recall, has been demonstrated in the formation of various committees. Members of these committees were selected in consensus with the late hero, Obbo Baaroo Tumsaa, who was the engineer and designer of the committee formations. The members showed remarkable commitment, dedication and respectfully listening to each other/one another in trustful working relationship. Recalling my experience in working with him, I would like to present the history about the formation of one of the committees. The formation of the committee was based on:

1. Genuine Oromos were selected and assigned to study and document the facts and impacts of Ethiopian colonization of Oromia and the Oromos.
2. Individuals were selected from multidisciplinary background.
3. Members were given information thoroughly on how to study and produce the document.
4. Obbo Baaroo provided the guideline on security in the process of oath taking not to publicize the meeting place, time and research topic without the knowledge of the chairperson.
5. The committee chair person reported to Obbo Baaroo who worked closely with this committee chair.
6. The challenge to establish a confidential working group relation was valued as fundamental.

In reference to the document produced in 1971 that circulated among Oromos: "Voices against Tyranny", I witnessed how cooperation could result into a historical document. The model was designed by Obbo Baaroo who provided guidance. The model, I believe was exemplary in creating trustworthy working relationship with tolerance focusing on the central issues for self-determination and independence of Oromia. He was one of the leaders whose initiatives lead to modes of conducting and organizing meetings that set the foundation for the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). He was leading the foundation so humbly and with care and tolerance to different viewpoints constantly. There was always consensus that reflected the Gadaa/democratic principles before the colonization of the Oromo and Oromia. I also recall the late Reverend Gudina Tumsaa, the older brother Obbo Baaroo. Reverend Gudina was another great hero and an Oromo nationalist that we lost. He supported Obbo Baaroo in his initiatives for building the foundation of the OLF. We may ask one another how the OLF foundation model that had been skillfully set could be revitalized and transform the leadership to be more productive to reconstruct, with creativity and skill that mobilizes the Oromo natural resources to lead the Oromo nationalism/Oromummaa and achieve independence for the Oromo and Oromia. What tasks to lay out, what task force(s) to form and what model to use to save the Oromos and Oromia?

Youth Reproductive Health and Risk Behavior to STD/HIV-AIDS

Ahmed Abubeker

World wide, young women and men suffer a disproportionate share of unplanned pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, and other serious reproductive health problems. This cross-sectional community based descriptive study was conducted in West Harargie, Assebe Teferi, with the main objectives of assessing magnitude of risk reproductive health behaviors of youth, level of substance use, magnitude of factors that influence the preference and utilization of health services and examining youth attitude and willingness to VCT. Based on probability proportionate to the population size of each kebele and sub zones, lottery method was used to identify the study population.

Out of targeted 844 youth aged 15-24, 774 of which 75% of them are Oromo youth responded to the structured questionnaire, thus, 375 (48.4%) were male, with male to female ratio of 1:1.06. Among

the study participants, 490 (63.3%) belong to age 15-19, and 106 (13.7%) were married. Sixty seven percent of them married before reaching age 18, with mean age of 17.2 ± 2.4 years. It was also identified that 9% of the marriages were by abduction. Out of the total respondents, 35.6% were sexually active, comprising 34.53% married and 65.47% unmarried. Among the sexually active group, 8.1% had reported that their first sexual intercourse was rape. In addition to this, 142 (70.65%) of unmarried sexually active group had unsafe sex at their first intercourse, (not used condom). Consequently, 13 (4.2%) and 32 (10.4%) of them encountered STDS and unplanned pregnancy at their first sexual intercourse, respectively. Use of modern contraceptive was 25.7% among the sexually active group, while condom utilization at their latest intercourse was 63.2% among unmarried. Because of unsafe sexual practice, 29 (9.41%) of the sexually active had history of STDs in the last one year prior to this study, out of which 2.3% of the cases were among married. It was also reported that 102 (33.2%) of the sexually active youths encountered unplanned pregnancy and 30.4% of these ended with abortion. The magnitude of substance use among the youth was assessed and it revealed that 420 (54.3%) of the respondents had exposure to substance use and 38% of them reported that their sexual desire rises following substance use. In the assessment of utilization and preference of the health institution, more than 36% preferred to be served in FGAE clinic. On the other hand, 18.7% of the study group claimed that the existing health institution (HI) was not welcoming when they need service. The reasons were 73.4% and 58.3%, respectively, complained prolonged waiting for the service and service inconsistency. Because of these, youth friendly health service was suggested to be available and 316 (41%) of the youth indicated the need to rearrange in the existing health institution having its own unit, and 36.7% of them preferred to be served by young and of the same sex. This study also revealed that 88.5% of the respondents have VCT information and 92.2% of them reported that they need to have VCT.

Logistic regression analysis indicated that, female were more vulnerable to risk reproductive behaviors as compared to their male counterpart. On the other hand, the older group was found to have unsafe sexual activity compared to the younger group. It was also observed that married group had risky sexual activity compared to the unmarried. Similarly, those who used substance and those who had pocket money were more engaged in unsafe sexual activity. This study indicated that youth in the study area were engaged in risky sexual activity that exposed them to various RH problems. Youth focused health services were not well organized that requires collaboration among different sectors and the community to facilitate youth friendly health services to promote youth health.

Agenda for Unity of Purpose

Apee Jobi

My presentation will focus on what political agenda Southern academics and politicians should encourage in order creating an environment for unity of purpose among their people. I will specifically discuss how this unity should come about and what scholars as well as politicians should each do to change the oppression their people are facing.

Leadership and Organizational Issues in the Oromo National Movement

Asafa Jalata

This paper identifies and analyzes some major political, leadership and organizational problems in the Oromo national struggle in order to suggest practical solutions. Data and information for this paper were collected through various mechanisms, including purposive sampling and open-ended questions, previous research findings, informal networks, conversations, the media, etc. The main goal of this paper is to persuade Oromo activists, leaders and organizations to develop policy initiatives that assist them to

critically look at their political behavior and performance in order to build on their strengths and to overcome their weaknesses to advance the Oromo national struggle.

Student Movements Around the World, a Synopsis

Asfaw Beyene

Although US Supreme Court ruling, *Brown v. Board of Education*, outlawed segregation in US schools, many racist school systems defied the law by intimidating and threatening black students. The Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, was exceptionally notorious. Nine black teenagers were determined to attend the school and receive the same education offered to white students. On the first school day, the governor of Arkansas ordered the state's National Guard to block the black students from entering the school. The black teenage students confronted armed soldiers.

In late 1960s in Germany, a student movement grew as a reaction against the perceived authoritarianism and hypocrisy of the German government including poor living conditions of students. A wave of protests swept Germany, fueled by over-reaction of the police, and encouraged by other student movements across the world. The first demonstration took place in front of the Opera House of Berlin while the Shah of Iran was visiting. Irritated by the gathering, the Berlin police and the Iranian secret service attacked the student protestors. One student was shot in the head and killed from behind by police. As the number of protesting students grew in size, the students took over control of the Free University of Berlin. The spirit of the students in Berlin spread across the entire country and protest groups were organized at nearly every university in Germany. Over the following months, Germany saw some of the largest and most brutal demonstrations in its history.

In France, May 1968 a caricaturist drafted a shadow of General de Gaulle holding a student's mouth with his left hand. In the poster, the General told the student: "Be young and shut up. A general strike that was started by students engulfed the entire France quickly reaching near-revolutionary proportions. In fact, many philosophers and historians argue that the rebellion was the single most important revolutionary event of the 20th century. The heavy-handed intervention of police further inflamed the situation leading to street battles of students with the police. The students' strike grew much larger when ten million French workers, roughly two-thirds of the French workforce, joined.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China passed "the 16 Points" decree during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR). This decree took the already existing student movement and elevated to the level of a nationwide mass campaign, calling on not only students but also "the masses of the workers, peasants, soldiers, revolutionary intellectuals, and revolutionary cadres" to carry out the task of "transforming the superstructure" by writing big-character posters and holding "great debates." The decision granted the most extensive freedom of speech the People's Republic has ever seen, but this was a freedom severely determined by the Maoist ideological climate and, ultimately, by the People's Liberation Army and Mao's authority over the Army, as points 15 and 16 made it clear. Eventually, the freedom grew into a truly independent movement resulting in the Tian'anmen Square protest, which was forcefully suppressed by the People's Liberation Army.

The **Tlatelolco Massacre**, also known as **Tlatelolco's Night** (from a book title), took place on the afternoon and night of October 2, 1968, in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in the Tlatelolco section of Mexico City. The death toll remains uncertain: some estimates place the number of deaths in the thousands, but most sources report 200-300 deaths. Many more were wounded, and several thousand were arrested. The massacre was preceded by months of political unrest in the Mexican capital. The Mexican students wanted to exploit the attention focused on Mexico City for the 1968 Olympic Games. President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, however, was determined to stop the demonstrations and, in September, he ordered the army to occupy the campus of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, the largest university in Latin America. Students were beaten and arrested indiscriminately.

From the middle of the 1960s, Czech and Slovak students showed increasing signs of rejection of the existing regime. The communist approved students' union had organized a demonstration to commemorate

the 50th anniversary of a student protest against the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia. Presumably uncomfortable about the parallels between that protest and the current political situation, riot police were sent to stop the students before they reached Wenceslas Square. When the students refused to disperse a tense stand-off followed. In the spirit of non-violent resistance, some protestors passed flowers to the police. Suddenly, without warning, the riot police attacked, injuring hundreds of students. Today, underneath the arches at the corner of Narodni třída and Mikulandská street, a bronze sculpture commemorates the event.

Iranian students have been an important political force since the 1970s. In fact, high school and university students were a major element of the street demonstrations that helped bring down the Shah in 1978. Moreover, it was a group of Islamic fundamentalist university students who, on their own, took over the U.S. Embassy in Tehran in 1979, setting off the 444-day hostage crisis between Iran and the US. The hostage crisis was seen as the primary reason for the defeat of President Carter during the next presidential election. A middle Eastern scholar once asked why did Iran of the late 1970s with a thriving economy, wealthy middle class, repressive political system, massive military might, and powerful international allies go through an Islamic revolution, while Egypt of the early 1990s with similar international allies, but poorer economy, impoverished large middle class, and a more liberal political system did not go beyond developing an Islamist movement?

Update on the Gada System

Asmerom Legesse

GADA is essentially a republication. It would have been inappropriate to make too many changes in it: whatever changes were made are matters of factual information which were corrected by subsequent research and are reflected in footnotes rather than the body of the text. The significant addition is only in one area. That has to do with all the work done by ARCHAEO ASTRONOMERS who have made significant discoveries using the account of the Borana astronomic calendar in Gada as the starting point. The developments are exciting and an account of them has been appended to the chapter on time and history. There is also a section on MATHEMATICS, dealing with mathematical concepts in Gada that have now been recognized by mathematicians. Another change has to do with the distinction between mura and ebba separating the RITUAL AND POLITICAL SPHERES. Because of this, the Gada life cycle is now presented as rites of passages (jila) and political transition ceremonies, and both are distinguished from Gumi Gayo, which is neither a ritual, nor a ceremony, but a national legislative convention. The latter is the most important substantive change in both Gada and Oromo Democracy.

Food-Insecurity: A Real Threat to the Oromo People

Assefa Regassa

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims that everyone has the right of access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food and as such, Governments of the world countries have the responsibility to protect all people within their territories from hunger. Ethiopians are probably the most food insecure people in the world as measured by the Daily Dietary Energy Supply. The daily per capita calories supply for the Ethiopian peoples is about 1800. This figure is far below the minimum requirement of 1960 and the world average of about 2810. Poverty, low agricultural productivity and demographic situation of the Empire have been identified as the main underlying causes of food insecurity in Ethiopia. About 60 % of the Ethiopian peoples live below the absolute poverty line. Population is growing at an annual rate of 3.1 %, while the agricultural productivity is very low. The frequent famine of the resource-poor areas of northern Ethiopia (Abyssinia) has now spread to the southern part of the Empire including Oromia. It is claiming lives and making the future citizens of the country mentally and physically handicap. All successive governments of the Ethiopian Empire have been spending the scarce resources of the Empire on building strong military to maintain the territorial integrity

of the forcefully created Empire and consolidate their power rather than addressing the root-causes of food insecurity. Therefore, it is suggested that all concerned parties do every thing possible to alleviate the food insecurity threat posed on the Oromo people before it gets worse.

Martial De Salviac Unveils Untold Legacies of the Oromo

Ayalew Kano

De Salviac's book on the Oromo was published in French in 1901 and contains eyewitness accounts of what transpired during his time; as well as excerpts from documented accounts by others during and before his time. De Salviac was a Capuchin Catholic missionary who lived in Ethiopia in the late 1800s. He spoke Oromiffa; studied Oromo way of life, religion, culture, system of justice and governance. The book is very informative and educational as it renders invalid the negative perceptions of the Oromo formed by other misguided authors who went as far as stating that the Oromo contributed nothing to Ethiopian civilization. This discussion summarizes De Salviac's 19th century accounts that positively reflect Oromo national character in contrast to the negative assertions of some 20th century authors. De Salviac portrays the Oromo as a people with elevated spirit, and who believed in a universal creator they called *Waaqa*; with high social organization; with a fair system of justice and governance; who contributed to the regeneration of the Abyssinian empire, and who in the process enticed to defend it. De Salviac regretted that such a gallant nation was victimized, and predicted that the sons of the sky would reunite and that their liberty would not die. De Salviac's contributed toward the reckoning of untold Oromo legacies, and the setting of the record straight.

Perspectives on Strategic Challenges Facing the Oromo National Struggle for Political and Economic Freedom: Extremists, Moderates, or?

Bahiru Duguma

Since Ethiopia colonized Oromia in the late nineteenth century, the nation's resistance to occupation only grew in lips and bounds. The different forms of resistances with a varying degree of intensity and magnitude ultimately evolved into a full-fledged armed struggle in the early 1970s. Until the mid-1990s, Oromos have been in agreement on what the solution to the colonial question is (freedom) and how to get it (armed struggle). Since then, competing ideas have emerged, and depending on who supports which idea, Oromos are frequently branded as extremists and/or moderates. Although active politicians may disagree, the main difference is more on how the Oromos will be able to get what they want (through strength or democratic process) than on what they actually want (freedom). Accordingly, we argue that there are no extremists or moderates among the Oromos. The overwhelming majority of Oromos, both at home and in Diaspora perceive this development (i.e. the difference in strategic choice on how to liberate Oromia from colonial rule) as a significant hindrance to achieving the national dream-freedom. Are the differences on issues of national ideology and the strategy to support and/or achieve it real and substantive? If yes, what are the likely explanations for the differences and what should the nation be doing not to derail its journey to freedom, stability, and economic prosperity?

This paper is not intended to provide definitive answer to these questions. Instead, based on an in-depth review of historical records, experience of colonized people, policy papers, informal interviews, and other relevant sources, it suggests theories behind and explanations for some of the behaviors and actions of some Oromo groups, especially those who seek to be free for free. The ultimate objective is to encourage focused intellectual exchange that would hopefully lead to identification of valid and legitimate answers that the Oromos collectively own and use it to better articulate shared strategy to support the national struggle.

The review shows that the colonization of Oromia through military means was consolidated in the early twentieth century. Consistent with the practice of most colonial powers, the successive regimes of the empire, especially those of Minilik II and Haile Silassie I, perpetually fought the Oromos on several fronts, including but are not limited to the following: (1) the Oromo culture, language, religion, and political system was systematically and viciously destroyed, (2) the Oromos were systematically denied the right to education, (3) the state policies, institutions, judiciaries, and defense establishments were built and used to systematically transfer wealth and resources from the colonized to the colonizers; thereby economically wrecking Oromos and Oromia, and (4) where and when the Oromos were allowed to benefit, i.e., go to school, have a job, own a business, etc, from being part of the empire, they were permitted to do so not as Oromos, but as Amaharas.

A comparative analysis of the experience of the struggle of the colonized people in Africa and elsewhere suggests that unless a major shift in international politics occurs, freedom comes only through strength. It involves pain and significant cost. At best, it is never free. We argue that in the case of the Oromo national struggle, the rationale for the emergence of the vote for the alternative strategy (democratization as a short cut or free pass to freedom) is rooted in or is an outcome of the deeds of the colonial power over the last 100 years, the potent one being the emasculation of Oromo nationalism, deprivation of access to education, and inculcation of sense of inferiority. Accordingly, we suggest that these factors be exhaustively analyzed and the nature, depth, and magnitude of their impact on Oromo national struggle to date be quantified to inform Oromo political leaders and strategists.

The Impact of Globalization on the Oromo Economy under the Colonial Rule of the State of Ethiopia: the Interplay of Politics, Policies, and Economics

Bahiru Duguma

Oromia was colonized by Ethiopia in the late 19th century (Library of Congress). Common motives for colonization include, but they are not limited to (1) access to more fertile land, (2) to escape from “drought and famine”; (3) new economic opportunities, (4) a desire to stimulate trade and find markets for growing industrial outputs, and (5) escape from economic hardships (http://idcs0100.lib.iup.edu/WestCivI/causes_of_colonization.htm). The case of Ethiopia and Oromia is not any different.

The above rationales are indeed the compelling reasons for the initial colonization and continued occupation of Oromia by the Ethiopians. Consequently, regardless of the type of economic (e.g. free market) or political (e.g. communist, feudal, military dictatorship, ethnic federalism, etc) systems that the State of Ethiopia has proclaimed to have embraced at one time or the other, the impact of its colonial policies and governance strategies on the economy of Oromia has always been one-dimensional - sustained transfer and/or appropriation of Oromo wealth for the sole benefit (comfort and economic development) of the colonizers.

This paper examines how the colonial state is effectively exploiting the fundamentals of globalization to support this long-standing colonial agenda of viciously looting what legitimately belongs to the Oromo nation for the benefit of its (Ethiopian) citizens. Among other things, the process of globalization is fostered through generous development assistance to governments perceived to be democratic and supportive of free market economy, free flow of capital, increased privatization of publicly held business and assets, etc. These are influenced and/or implemented through government policies, be it national or international.

Our analysis shows that the policy makers of Ethiopia, who wield absolute political and military power in the country, are effectively using this phenomenon to enrich themselves and their people with devastating consequences on the Oromo people and the economy of Oromia. Foreign aid and loans received on behalf of the over 30 million Oromos are exclusively invested in the Ethiopia proper (e.g. Tigray). Oromo lands are confiscated from Oromo peasants for a nominal fee and leased to either foreign corporations for a

thousand times more revenue than are paid to the original owners or given free or for a nominal fee to the members of the ruling class and their cronies. In fact, the government is neither apologetic nor does it see anything abnormal with its action as, through its Embassies abroad, it proudly advertises the cheap land and labor that it freely offers to prospective foreign investors.

Abduction of Young Girls for Marriage or “Butti”: Girls’ Nightmare and Violation of Human Rights

Belletech Deressa

Objectives of this paper are:

- To inform audiences and readers to understand “abduction of young girls for marriage” as a violation of women’s rights.
- To expose such harmful customs and call upon local authorities, community leaders and scholars to address this problem.
- To educate people that abduction of young girls in particular has a negative effect on the wellbeing of women, affect the health status of young women, limit their education, expose women and young girls to sexually transmitted diseases and has negative effect in the development of nation and society in which they live.

Background Information:

The practice of abduction of women for the purpose of marriage still persists in many countries, including Ethiopia. Abduction in this context refers to forced “wife acquisition”. In the southern regions of Ethiopia, nearly 80% of marriages are reported to be the result of abduction, according to the Human Rights and Women of the World Report of 2000.

Although illegal, the abduction of women and girls as a form of marriage is practiced widely in Oromia region and Southern Nations and Nationalities People’s regional state (SNNPS). Forced sexual relationships often accompany most marriage by abduction, and women often are physically abused during the abduction. Abductors are often older men. Forcing women to marry their abductors, however, is not only widely acceptable, but releases the man from any wrongdoing. Abductors are immune from persecution because families agree to formalize the marriage through the mediation of elders. Some reasons behind marriage by abduction are poverty, that many men in the rural areas cannot afford to pay dowry and buy gifts to a woman and her family; illiteracy, gender disparities and lack of effective laws.

This practice is harmful for women, especially for young girls in multiple ways:

- a. Abduction of girls for marriage involves rape and physical abuse.
- b. It forces young girls to drop out of school at a tender age.
- c. Forced sexual relations expose women and girls to sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS.
- d. It results in early motherhood and increases maternal mortality rate.

Methodology:

- a. Collect data on abduction of girls and young women for marriage in the Ethiopian empire as well as in other countries.
- b. Examine the negative effect of this practice on young girls and young women.
- c. Identify legal implications of such practices.

The Oromo Struggle for National Libation and the Questions of Human Rights, the Rule of Law and Democracy

Beyan H. Asoba

This paper discusses the dialectics of collective human rights, national self-determination and the questions of individual human rights, the rule of law and democracy relevant to the Oromo people's struggle for national self-determination. The objective of Oromo people's struggle is the realization the Oromo people's right to national self determination. As such, it is a struggle to freely determine the political status of the Oromo nation. It is also a struggle to freely pursue the Oromo nation's economic, social and cultural development. Furthermore, it is a struggle to enable the Oromo people to freely dispose Oromia's natural wealth resources within international laws and agreements. It is also a struggle to end the alien deprivation of the Oromo people's means of subsistence. History particularly that of Africa, teaches that the realization of national liberation/collective human rights does not necessarily lead to the protection of human rights, the rule of law and democracy. As seen in many African countries, a national liberation may also lead to a tyranny. I argue that the Oromo national liberation that does not protect individual human rights, that is not based on the rule of law and democracy is not a complete liberation. The Oromo people's struggle for national liberation need to avoid the paternalistic policy of African national liberation struggles and nation building exercises that led to tyranny. Therefore, in order to make the Oromo national liberation a complete one, the Oromo people's struggle for national self-determination must also at the same time lay ground for the protection of individual human rights, the rule of law and democracy.

Challenges and Opportunities in the Ethiopian Political Landscape

Beyene Petros Lodamo

Some issues pertaining to the making of the Ethiopian polity and its historical underpinnings will be highlighted. It will be argued that the source of lingering political problems in Ethiopia is the generations-long unhealed scars from the brutal Empire-building process. Attention will be drawn to the reality that any attempt at re-fixing the Empire-building handiwork of past generations, in an amicable manner, rarely has any historical precedent. Global experience will be invoked to vision an agreeable solution to the outstanding problem of nation building in Ethiopia. An attempt will be made to point out missed opportunities to national consensus building and placing the country in a democratic trajectory. This, among other things, would include the failure to form a post-Haileselassie I transitional government; the failure to settle the Eritrean secessionist movement through negotiations; the missed opportunity for an all-inclusive negotiated exit for the Dergue regime; the failure to form an all-inclusive post-Dergue transitional government and the most recent failure to form a government of national unity following the year 2005 election controversy. Thus, it will be argued that the serious failures and omissions in our historical past and present have left immense challenges for the current generation, and if this generation of ours does not live up to the task it must accomplish, the problem will unfortunately spill over into posterity. The critical challenges of:

- . Cultivating trust among political parties;
- . Building consensus around the Constitutional order;
- . Establishing guarantees for Human Rights and enforcement of the Rule of Law;
- . Building consensus on the conduct of free, fair and genuine elections;
- . Separation of the three arms of government;
- . Instituting equity and fairness in development and resource allocation;

Equity and transparency in the composition and command of the national army, the police and the security, among others, remain to be serious obstacles that must be overcome. While emphasizing the existing serious challenges that must be overcome with a great sense of responsibility, farsightedness, perseverance and patience, some basis for optimism in the nascent opportunities for forming a government of national consensus will be explored.

Current Responses to the Political and Economic Crises in Oromia

Bichaka Fayissa

On the political front, the minority regime in Ethiopia has established in 1994 the “Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front, EPDRF” with the promises of devolving power to the nine regional states, the democratization of politics, and the liberalization of the economy. The regime devised such ambitious goals of democratic governance only to get internal legitimacy and international donors’ supports. Because the regime is an extension of the colonial rule in Ethiopia, Oromos had no illusion about outcome of the regime’s dismal governance and performance.

Fifteen years later, however, citizens, observers, and donors have come to realize that the above goals of the regime are nothing, but false promises. Some researchers have in fact, noted that Ethiopia since the Derg has been a decade of democratic pretension and performance (Pausewang, et al., 2002). The conclusion of these observers is that a formal structure of democratic institutions is largely controlled by a party structure reluctant to accept any challenge to its authority (Vaughan and Tronvoll, 2001). As the aftermath of the May 2005 election has revealed, the regime has become even more ruthless than when it seized power by cracking down on public dissent of the process and outcome what it claimed to be “free and fair” election, resulting in the loss of hundreds of innocent lives and the languishing of hundreds of thousands of people in sub-standard prisons across the country.

Its decentralization policy has also resulted in the total control of the rural communities having a devastating impact on their livelihoods through the creation of so called *Gott* and *Garee* systems. With instruction from the central government, the regional governments in Oromia have created two quasi-government structures in rural communities throughout the region below the *kebele* level. Rural *kebeles* are now divided into groups of households called *gott* encompassing between sixty to ninety households. Each *gott* is divided into smaller groups of roughly thirty households called *garee* misoma in Afaan Oromo, meaning “groups for development.” These structures were replicated from the TPLF which used it against the Derg. The *gott* and *garee* systems were introduced in Oromia about two years ago (2004).

Based on interviews by the Human Rights Watch, the *gott* and *garee* structures had been imposed on the rural communities from above without any kind of consultation (HRW, 2005).

On the Economic front, the resources of Oromia and other colonized nations are primarily controlled by the ruling party and their affiliates. Oromo and other business owners are burdened with exorbitant taxes, thus forcing them to lose their licenses. There is also wide spread unemployment of the educated Oromos. Thousands of Oromos are dying of the deadly disease of HIV-AIDS, preventable diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, and cholera, lack of food and drinking water in the drought affected areas. The anti-development administrative structures coupled with civil and political instability have also contributed to the ever-declining social safety net. This paper explores the alternative solutions offered by various Oromo organizations and evaluates their viability for averting the impending political and economic crises in Oromia.

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Oromos' Relationship to Other Ethnic Nationalities in Ethiopia

Bulcha Demeksa

- I. Brief overview of major ethnic formations- historical relationships and conflicts
 - (a) Oromo, (b) Amhara; (c) Tigre; (d) Somale; (e) Walaita; (f) Gurage; (g) Affar; (h) Sidama; (i) Hadiya; (j) Kambata; (k) Beni-Shangul Gumuz; (l) Gambella; (m) Others.
- II. Ethnic division and the future of Ethiopia:
 - (a) Risks - Religious differences; (b) Opportunities.
- III. Federalism:
 - (a) Ethnic basis; (b) Regional basis; (c) The Oromo-Oromos' unwillingness to be divided into regional autonomous "provinces".
- IV. Sharing of resources:
 - (a) Available resources
 - (b) Resources to be discovered - scenarios
 - (c) Experiences of other countries.
- V. Concluding remarks

Do Societies Choose to Succeed or Fail? A Comparative Study of Oromo and Abyssinian Social Structures

Daniel Ayana

For those who want a simple answer for the topic of this paper, the answer is a qualified "yes." For those who prefer a nuanced answer, the answer is both Yes and No. This paper studies the social structures, settlement patterns, and access to land at the village level to present a comparative picture of Oromo and Abyssinian political cultures. By focusing on access to land tenure and settlement patterns the paper tries to establish the foundation of how individuals and groups in both societies manage to overcome the existential issues of production. The interactions at the grassroots level shape the parameters of political cultures that are ever changing. For the Oromo the paper tries to show why their settlement pattern and access to land tenure tends to give rise to consensual settlement of disputes providing basic individual freedom. It will also slightly touch upon the impact of the Gada governance system in delaying the rise of kings in Oromo history. For the Abyssinians the paper sheds light why there has always been a tendency for the rise of strongmen. While the paper is methodologically historical, it also slides into the contemporary issues and finds that democracy is not an inevitable outcome for a society.

Saba Hima(media)n Deemsa Qabsoo Oromoo Keesatti Ghee Inni Qabu

Daraaraa Maatii

Barreefamni koo og-barru Oromoo irrati kan qiyyaafatu yoo ta'u, yeero amma kanatti og-barrun Oromoo sadarka akkami irrati akka argamu fi guddina isaf ammo mal gochuu akka qabnu xinxala. Wayee saba himaan Oromoo, kesumaa maxxansaaleen (print media)n damaqiinsa fi jabinaan ijaaramu saba keenyaaf murteesa akka ta'e ibsa. Rakoo ummati Oromoo karaa saba himaa qabu hikuuf maal gochun akka nurraa eegamu mulisa.

U.S. Support for Democratization in Ethiopia

David H. Shinn

The following is an abstract of the paper that I propose to present to the Oromo Studies Association in Minneapolis during its July 29-30 conference. I decided to limit my remarks to Ethiopia as that is the country of primary interest to this organization. Analysis of the situation in the entire Horn of Africa is just too wide of a topic. I will also confine my remarks to U.S. support for and policy on democratization in Ethiopia except in cases where other donor countries collaborated with the U.S. in support of a particular project. I am not in a position to discuss authoritatively the democratization policies of other western countries in Ethiopia.

The U.S. program to encourage democratization in Ethiopia follows a two track process. There is a diplomatic effort led by the American ambassador and a development component headed by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The paper will discuss efforts by the American embassy, especially in the time preceding and following the June 2005 national election, to encourage a free and fair electoral process. Different components of the body politic in Ethiopia have reacted both positively and negatively to the American diplomatic role.

The paper will identify the various programs financed by USAID over the past five years that the U.S. believes will help build democracy in Ethiopia. Some of the programs, such as support for the electoral process, will be seen by virtually all Ethiopians as part of building democracy. In other cases, however, the average Ethiopian may not even associate several of the programs with support for democratization. They include, for example, training of the judiciary, improving the budgetary process in Ethiopia's regions, training officials to combat trafficking in persons, and programs to mitigate local conflict. Most of these programs are implemented by non-governmental organizations such as the Carter Center, PACT, Mercy Corps, and Women's Campaign International. As a result, many Ethiopians may not even associate them with U.S. government attempts to encourage democratization in Ethiopia.

One can debate whether the U.S. has done enough over the years to press the government to open up the political system or whether it has provided sufficient funding for programs that encourage democratization. I tend to think the U.S. has not done enough. On the other hand, it has probably done a lot more than most Ethiopians realize. The paper will make both of these points. It will also put the issue in context. Creating democracy takes time under the best of circumstances. Ethiopia and its 2,000 years of autocracy has not been an easy environment in which to build this new political system. Foreign governments must function within the law of the land and seek the cooperation of the host government. The Ethiopian government has not consistently welcomed some U.S. initiatives. One only needs to cite the expulsion in 2005 of NDI, IRI, and IFES.

Three Perspectives on the Past and Future of the Oromo People

Donald N. Levine

In all human phenomena, both individual and collective, diverse narratives of the past lead to different definitions of the present situation and generate different orientations toward a desired future. In *Visions of the Sociological Tradition* (1995), I illustrated this point by analyzing diverse narratives about an intellectual discipline, and suggested how that kind of analysis can provide a template for investigating how human communities view themselves.

In this paper, I analyze three divergent narratives about the Oromo community, with an eye to seeing how they affect Oromo self-understandings in the present and their aspirations for the future. These three narratives are based, respectively, on an idealization of the traditional *gada* system, a history of Oromo oppression, and an interpretation of the essential Oromo role in building the modern Ethiopian nation. Each narrative contributes insight into the entire Oromo experience. Their juxtaposition both depends our understanding of that experience and clarifies options for ways in which to fashion the Oromo future.

Oromo Verbal Types and the Place of Afaan Oromo among Afroasiatic Languages

Ephraim Isaac

The Oromo verb has a rich set of stems with semantic variations. The paper attempts to give some insight into these stems and aspects of Afaan Oromo verbal modes. It does not deal with the conjugation of the forms nor in depth with their syntactical or semantic roles, but simply in their structure. I shall demonstrate that Oromo verbal mode is well organized, systematic, and predictable.

Linguistic evidence in the study of Afroasiatic languages has shown the earlier existence of wealth of forms. In the course of time, these forms have been reduced and lost as, for instance, in the North-West Semitic. The continued existence of the rich set of stems and modes in Afaan Oromo shows not only the wealth of the language but also its primary place in the origin of Afroasiatic. (The knowledge of the Oromo Verbal system can be of great value in expanding and modernizing the lexicon of Afaan Oromo.) I also attach my CV from which you can take information. You can send me what you wish to write if you like. Of course you can add that I was born and grew up in Nedjio where many of my relatives still live.

Dealing with Ambiguities: History, Politics, and Future of Oromo Nationalism

Ezekiel Gebbisa

The fall of the military-socialist regime, the *derg* (1974-1991), marked the apogee of the Oromo struggle for liberation. A little over a decade ago, Oromiya was a concept in the minds of Oromo nationalists, the *qubee* script a fancy dream of an Oromo organization striving to educate Oromos in the use of a foreign script, and being an Oromo a great obstacle to self-improvement in a world dominated by Amharic hegemony. Today Oromiya is a national entity with delineated boundaries and institutions of governance recognized by the Ethiopian government. The *qubee* script is the sole means of written *Afaan Oromoo*, the Oromo language, which is the medium of administration, instruction, and commerce in Oromiya. These achievements did not come about easily. It took three revolutions to do away with the Ethiopian economic, cultural, and political structures of domination that maintained colonial domination over the Oromo people for a century. The first attempt (1960) shook the colonial edifice to its foundation and stripped off its shroud of invulnerability. The second (1974) dealt a severe blow to the economic base that underpinned the colonial order. The third (1991) destroyed the political superstructure that had sustained Ethiopian colonial domination for several decades.

The TPLF regime's fallout with Eritrea, the dissensions within the ruling party, and the electoral challenge by opposition groups have rendered the political challenges of the regime tougher and exposed the reality that the regime's hold on power has always been tenuous. The widespread discontent and resultant instability are bound to precipitate the collapse of the current regime, an event likely to be vastly different from previous episodes. When Haile Sellassie's government collapsed in 1974 and the *derg* regime fell in 1991, the military and the guerilla groups that defeated the *derg* stepped in and established a successor government. Each time, the bureaucracy proved to be surprisingly resilient to carry on the routine task of running the government even when direction from a ruling body had ceased. In the event of the imminent collapse of the EPRDF government, given the absence of an organized body to take control of the helm of power and the lack of a cohesive and self-sustaining bureaucracy, the Ethiopian state faces the hard reality of a prolonged anarchy.

Even in this limited space of one-party domination of the Ethiopian political scene over the last decade, the Oromo people have been able to lay the foundations of Oromo identity, unity, and self-determination. Oromos must not wait for the regime to collapse so that they can rebuild from scratch. My paper argues that the Oromiya national state, its governing institutions such as the *Caafee Oromiya*, and the *qubee*

constituencies are important gains that must be protected and preserved as the basis for a free Oromiya, not alien institutions that should be left to the destruction of the imminent calamity of state collapse.

The Role of the Oromo Intellectual in the National Liberation Struggle

Fido T. Ebba

The participation and non-participation of Oromo intellectuals in their own people's national liberation struggle was assessed using data gathered from among Oromo nationals in diaspora in three localities in the USA. The data from this study and information gathered from literatures, observations, and experiences of the last 30 years and beyond clearly demonstrated that the non-participation of Oromo intellectuals in the Oromo national liberation struggle is significantly high, i.e. there is a high degree of non-participation by Oromo intellectuals.

The expectation that intellectuals in most societies are nationalist doesn't seem to hold in the Oromo society to a significant degree. The largest number has been lackeys of the Abyssinian colonizers and still a large number, particularly in diaspora, has been apathetic and lack patriotism.

The Role of Diaspora in Strengthening Democracy in the Horn of Africa: The Case of Ethiopia

Fowsia Abdulkadir

This paper focuses on the role that the Ethiopian Diaspora can play to solidify the foundations of democracy in Ethiopia. Ethiopia is at cross-roads in terms of fundamentally changing the way in which the country is governed. Particularly looking at the last decade and half, Ethiopia has embarked on the beginning of a transformation which has the potential for new dawn which can bring an inclusive ethnic-based democracy. Although it made attempts to implement some progressive policies, the Ethiopian state seems to be slipping back into some of its old tricks of state sponsored human rights violations. However, it is time that requires intervention from, not only the international community but from Ethiopians in the Diaspora.

To underline the significant role that can be played by the Ethiopian communities in the Diaspora, this paper will commence with a section that provides an overview of some of the inherent reasons that compel people to leave their country in the Horn of Africa, highlighting the socio-political context of Ethiopia. Even though the specific reasons for leaving one's country are context specific to individual circumstances, nevertheless there are two interconnected factors referred to in the literature as the "push-pull" factors of migration, these concepts will be examined within the context of Ethiopia.

To further capture the Diaspora and all of its positive deeds, the notion of "brain drain" will be analyzed as it pertains to the case of Ethiopia. This concept is important in so far as it underscores the shift of migration patterns from Africa into the Diaspora. Earlier many Africans came out to receive education in Europe and North America with intent of returning home to put all that good education into good use. Migration trends have been different, if prior to sixties many Africans left Africa to gain education and then returned to their home countries lately Africans emigrate after they receive their education in Africa, hence draining of the continent much needed expertise and skills. There is a growing alarm that Africa's 'brain drain' is happening at a statistically alarming rate. Africa is losing the very skilled professionals it needs for its substantive economic and social progress. This paper will conclude with some suggestion for the future role of the Diaspora, and ideas for transformative educational projects.

The Impact of Land Ownership on Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability in Oromia

Gobena Huluka

Land is the lifeline for the Oromos since 80% or more of them extract their livelihood from some forms of agricultural activities. When Oromos were conquered by Menilik in the 19th century, their land was given to his invading army, “neftegna” “armed-settler” and collaborators, thus the Oromos people became landless servants. Haile Selassie’s regime also continued similar land policy with no change for the Oromos where feudalists, the crown and the Ethiopian Orthodox church owned most of the Oromo land. “Land to the Tiller” was the battle cry of the Ethiopian student movement in the 1970s that contributed to the fall of Haile Selassie’s feudeo-aristocratic system. The land issue became the most important question for the military junta who nationalized all the land, abolished the feudal land holding system, and embraced a socialist ideology. The current government of Ethiopia became the sole owner of land when it forced out the military junta. Still Oromos are tenants of the Ethiopian government who ration land allocation, use and rent at its own free will even though it proclaims a capitalistic free market economy system. It is time to demand “land to the owners” by which Oromo lands will be returned to their indigenous rightful owners so that Oromos securely invest in agricultural production and sustainability. Oromo agriculturalists will be set free from government yoke and control to map their own economic destiny. The issues of land entitlement, ownership, use and productivity are very important for the Oromos. In addition, the relationship between land ownership, land productivity (total production and efficiency) and sustainability will be discussed by considering different land holding systems. In the US, less than 3% of its population is farming and it produces surplus, while on the other extreme, more than 80% of Ethiopians (including Oromos) are farming but Ethiopia is faced with food insecurity, famine and poverty every year. Privatization of land alone may not necessarily remedy the chronic food deficit the country in general and the Oromia particular since land productivity and sustainability are affected by many other factors such as soil fertility, fertilizer use, rainfall, state of technical development, economic and political stability, capital and quality of human resources that are invested in agriculture.

The Viability of the Economy of Oromia: A Point of Departure

Harwood D. Schaffer

The viability of the economy of Oromia as an independent nation, or as a part of a fully multi-national, fully democratic Ethiopia in which all peoples share in governance, is dependent upon the physical and cultural resources the participants bring to it. As the largest ethno-nation within Ethiopia, the Oromo will bear significant responsibility for leadership in any new political formation. Because over 80 percent of the population of Oromia and Ethiopia are engaged in agriculture, this paper examines the available physical resources by looking at the agricultural production of the present Ethiopia as well as two configurations of an independent Oromia. Taking into account the present physical resources and challenges this paper then argues that the foundation of an economy of a new government needs to be based upon the cultural traditions and values of the Oromo and other peoples and that the wholesale adoption of Ameri/Eurocentric traditions and values, particularly in economics, will result in the continued underdevelopment of the largest nation in the Horn of Africa.

The State of Oromo Struggle

Ibsa Gutama

It is on every Oromo mind as to why the Oromo struggle is lagging behind expectations. It is high time that these questions are turned into open debate. This presentation will look into Oromo history in brief, with intention of finding the causes in our past. The effect of the dispersal from Odaa Nabee on Oromo political and social culture and the effect it had on Gadaa democracy will be examined. How Oromo that went in different direction picked up new outlooks, the weakening effect it has on traditional culture will be taken into consideration. This of course will touch upon the different religions. The effects of colonialism will be touched upon. This is what divided the Oromo further after the Odaa Nabee episode. Effects of the 1974 revolution shall be examined. That also played a role in splitting educated Oromos. The Wayyaanee effect will be explored, and the 2005 election and the opposition dilemma will be pinpointed. Some remarks on the current student uprising will also be given, and some points will be raised concerning where we find ourselves now. When talking of Oromo struggle to rotate around OLF cannot be helped. Therefore, the split that occurred in the OLF and how different groups and powers view it will be raised. Suggestions for minimizing the damages caused by the split, and putting the Oromo struggle on track again will be forwarded in the presentation.

The Pen is Mightier than the Sword: The Role of Waldhaansso and Ejerssa Journals in Promoting and Propagating Oromo Struggle in North America

Jima Tufa

It is often said that the “the pen is mightier than the sword”, this adage, expressed simply and concretely the truth based on common sense and practical human experiences. Those of us who were in the Oromo Diaspora devised methods and processes to communicate with each other and promote our issues and grievances to sympathetic audiences at large. Pamphleteering was the easiest and cheapest venue to publish social and political issues with polemics and disputations.

Early in our organizational development, we resolved that in order to expose the treachery of Abyssinia colonial regime, we need to have a publication that espouses the political and historical reality our nation was mired in the Empire. Waldhaansso was launched as the primary organ of the Oromo Student Union in North America. Its contents chronicled views and issues we thought timely and appropriate. For about twenty five years, this Journal expounded and advocated views and issues that we thought were relevant and intrinsic to the Oromo nation’s cause. It was published quarterly and widely distributed in North America and other places.

As we matured politically and as community in North America, several publications were emerging to engage in the debate about the Ethiopian empire in general and about the Oromo nation (Oromia) in particular. It was during the hey days of political debates about the Empire, independent Oromia, the collapse of the socialist movement and the inevitable demise of the military junta in Ethiopia that the Journal Ejerssa emerged in North America as a free for all medium of politics, culture, arts news and views. It was very instrumental in reaching out to wider audiences with out the ideological and polemical convictions that Waldhaansso maintained.

I will explore retrospectively the role of these two publications, and others, in the struggle for Oromia in the past three decades. The contributions, controversies, disputes and benefits will be probed.

Oromo Student Protest

Kulani A. Jalata

My paper will discuss about the Oromo students protest movement against the Ethiopian government and its brutal, tyrannical rule. It will explain about how brave Oromo students are questioning this government. When protests first began and what is causing their increase in numbers will also be included. Protest events that have occurred, how many students attended, why they occurred, and their results will be elucidated. I will discuss about what kind of actions the Ethiopian government is taking in response to the growing number of students protesting, for example, the raids against protestors. The contradictory results the Ethiopian government is receiving will also be mentioned.

I will discuss about consequences students face because they have protested. These will include leaving home, being expelled from school, torture, rape, or death. Names and pictures of particular students who were killed because they protested will also be included thoroughly. I will explain that Oromo students are simply defending their rights when they protest about the oppression of the Oromo people by the Ethiopian government. I will elucidate that Oromo students are today courageously standing up for self-determination, democracy and justice for the Oromo people while accepting the risks they take when doing so.

No Going Back: Language Promotion in Oromiya Region

Lahra Smith

Perhaps the experience of no other ethno-linguistic group better illustrates the complex and contested realities of ethnic politics in the modern Ethiopian state than that of the Oromo people. Though the largest ethnic group in terms of population size, they have been understudied historically, their identities reviled and their people subjected to intense political and social pressures for assimilation and acculturation. Recent scholarship on the Oromo people has enabled a fuller discussion on the place of the Oromo in regional history. This includes study of the internal social and political dynamics that led to the formation of an "Oromo people," the various sub-clan groupings that constitute the Oromo, and particularly, their historical relationship to both the ancient Abyssinian Empire and the modern Ethiopian state. However, considerably less has been written about the implications of contemporary political processes on Oromo identity and especially, the relationship of Oromo ethnicity and national citizenship identities.

In particular, study of the Oromo question today demonstrates that on matters of identity politics and citizenship, there can be no turning back on strides made in inclusion and self-government for the Oromo people. While there are vocal challenges made by those opposed to ethnic federalism, often veiled attempts to return to an assimilationist or structurally dominant political system, it is nearly impossible to imagine such an outcome, in large part because of the tremendous impetus to regional self-determination provided by Oromo embrace of and successful implementation of reforms in this direction. This paper looks specifically at the development of Afaan Oromo in Oromiya regional state under the present federal arrangement, based in part on 14 months of fieldwork in Ethiopia, including Bale and Borana Zones of Oromiya Region. I will describe the extent of this with regard specifically to language policy, and argue that any and all future political configurations will have to incorporate meaningful ethnic autonomy on matters such as language, but including at the very least other cultural and/or identity matters.

The Role of Social Capital in Nation Building

Lenco Bati

Social capital - the norms and taboos, networks, authority structures, information channels, and social trust that facilitate civic engagement, and cooperation in communities and societies, is an important public resource to accomplish common public projects. As the Oromo nationalist project seeks to mobilize the Oromo people to attain freedom and self-rule, it is important to promote social capital strategies that promote cohesion and collaboration. In pursuit of national self-determination for Oromo, the OLF has been promoting the idea of nationalism, active citizenship, and greater partnership between the public and the movement. Building on ethos of Oromumma, it is important to highlight the importance of social capital formation focusing on enhancing national identity, safeguarding cohesion, developing global networks and harnessing diversity. These are high order social capital strategies of a maturing society.

Citing research findings on social capital literature as well as presenter's own observation of the Oromo society and the prevailing political culture, this paper examines the importance of social capital in the public life of the Oromo people. It highlights some salient features of positive social capital (that are responsible civic engagement and social behavior) and negative social capital (that breeds exclusion, intolerance and oppression), concluding that social capital can make a difference to the health of society as a whole.

Challenges of Articulating Oromo National Liberation Struggle within Current Global Trends

Leenco Lata

I intend to discuss the worldview that informed the formation of the OLF in the early 1970s and how that worldview helped in envisioning internal Oromo relations and Oromo relations with other peoples of the empire, the Horn of Africa and the world at large. That worldview, however, is not explicitly being invoked now thus indicating that the movement may simply be floating.

Guddifachaa: Sirna Gadaa

Lubee Birru

Sirnii Gadaa sirnaa taliiga qofaa meti. Jireenyi Oromoo Sirnaa Gadaa tin alaa metti. Rakkoon hundummtu Sirna Gadaa keechatti furmaata argata. Ilmoo dhabuun rakko tokko, kanaaf Gadaaniis rakkina kanaaf seera furmaata tume ammallee iddo bayyeetti seeran itti hojaatama jira. Oromoo keechatti wanni Sirna Gadaatin ala ta'e hin jiru. Sernii Gadaa Odaa damee hedduu fakkata. Kanaaf Gadaa keecha siernii Guddifataa isaa beekamaadha.

Aada Oromoo keechatti sirnii Guddifataa iddo ol'ana qaba. Akka aada Oromootti namnnii ilmoo hin qabaannee hin jiru. Akki itti ilmaan argatanis biffaa adda adda qabaa. Tokko gudeedan ilmoo argachuudha. Dhirsiif niitin wal fuudhanii ijoollee gudeedan argatu jechuudha. Kan lammataa immo kan ilmoo gudeedan dhaban kiladhchaan dhalffatu hokan kaldhachaan argatu jechuudha. Ilmooon kaldhachaan aragaman kun guddiffata jedhamu. Guddiffata jechuun dhirssiifi Niitin hoo ilmoo gudeedan argachuu dadhaban Kaldhaachaaf Caaccu batanii manguddo ulffo waliin warra ilmoo qaban dhaaqu. Bitimma warra sana jalatti kufanii ilmoo nukenna jedhanii kadhatu. Kan sadaffa immo Mooggaassa jedhamaa. Mooggaasa jechuun namumaa guddaa kana akka Seera Gaddati waan barbaachusuu hundumaa guutani nama moggaffamu barbaadu kan moggafatu. Sernii kun iddo tokko tokkotti maqaa adda adda qabaa. Iddo Oromiyaa baha biiftutti Ilmaa hokaan intala Barcuuma jedhuun

Some Prospects for Averting the Looming Human Tragedy in Oromia: the Way Forward

Makonen Gelan

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia, in his letter to the British Monarch stated that he “conquered the Galas with the help of God”. Ever since then the Ethiopian State has changed names—from His Majesty’s Empire to Socialist Democratic Republic to Federal Democratic Republic—in essence, it remains an occupying force and a classic colonizer in the eyes of the Oromo people. Even though, Oromo social scientists agree on the fact that Oromia is still under occupation (save the few Ethiopianist Oromos), they are at variance on the way forward out of the looming human tragedy and danger under occupation. Charting the way out of the quagmire is the challenging issue with which the Oromo social scientists have yet to grapple with. To carry out such task the organizational deficit is increasingly becoming the major bottlenecks on grounds of credibility. If at all the enemy succeeded, the number one is poisoning the Oromo “political environment”, which is a distinguishable characteristic of the current political power in Ethiopia. Thus, the challenge of overcoming double jeopardy is posed: first removing obstacles to genuine discourses and then moving on to the substances of Oromo national interest is the burden of Oromo social scientists, as a matter of great social responsibility. For example, to discharge such a responsibility, how soon can the Oromo social scientist put to rest the current three debates floating back and forth between Oromos? First is, fighting occupation without seeking independence is a paradoxical position and so how to fix it. Second is, how to democratize a colonizer is phenomenon for which a theoretical blueprint is not available for assistance and so what about it. Third is, the hitherto uncharted path of empowering people languishing under occupation is a new concept and so how to go about it. Whether the above are genuine issues of concern or not, if not put to rest sooner than later, the Oromo social scientist have probably failed in what is the most pressing task of the day, as a matter of social responsibility to the Oromo public. Once the Oromos put their political house in order, undoubtedly the Oromo struggle will peak again and surpass its pre-1992 level, before the bitter setback is implanted.

Looking at the Ethiopian side of the equation, once again a collapse of regime is in progress. The collapse of the two successive regimes, Emperor Haile Selassie and the Derge produced no “wind of change” for the occupied peoples of the Southern Regions. The current regime from Tigray, proved equally brute and yet less gracious in general, than its two predecessors. In the last fifteen years of its rule, Ethiopia has been home of death and starvation, caused either by human or natural causes, for millions of peoples. Each and every village has been touched directly or indirectly by the deadliest and persistent wars. A period of respite, peace and tranquility (with exception of Tigray Region) only existed for a short while. The current regime from Tigray, EPRDF/TPLF, despite its military victories could not win the peace. As the result, peace and stability are way out of reach, while at the same time a quick fix is out of question. The strategy to win war is significantly different from the strategy to win peace; a realization that is missing. For example, defeating the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) may be easy but defeating the Oromo people is a dream.

Those of us who are sixty and over years old today have lived most of our adult lives in the eras the regimes of Emperor Haile Selassie, the Derge and the present EPRDF/TPLF. As third generation Oromos to live under occupation, we have witnessed characteristically three different Abyssinian regimes knocking out each other from political power. Why knock out of each other did not impact the Abyssinia policy of occupation inherited from the prime mover, Emperor Menelik II? Why will an Oromo strategize to democratize such regimes only to be accommodated? If the hope behind that is to get out of the quagmire, the Oromos have by far respectable options for which there are ample theoretical blueprints:

1. The first Option is to persistently stick to the inherent right to independence and follow the recent example of Eritrea despite the fact that the Cold War is now over and there is no client state interested in such enterprise as pre-1991 era of Cold War. Again despite the new

intimidating phenomenon of international terrorism at which the Ethiopian Empire is very adept to exploit in order to silence a legitimate struggle of the Oromos to overcome dire occupation.

2. Second option is with a strict adherence to the universally accepted one person one vote principle; the Oromos have the right to take over the political power following the foot path of South Africa, in which the minority relinquished state power to the majority of the citizens who suffered under the apartheid system. The question is can the South African model work for Ethiopia? The answer to this question is long ago given by the Ethiopian political leadership as big “NO”. To be more specific, the official reaction is: “What we won through gun battles no one can take away short of the defeat of gun battles”. In short all other: conducting elections, legislative, judiciary and whatever have to remain subservient to goal of winning the war. It is even questionable, if peace winning was part of winning the war.

To conclude, the Oromo people are sickened by lies and false hopes they were generously served, which were far more than their share. At this point their appetite is dead; they can not take a single molecule. Those of us, who are tired of running the length it takes, have to step aside with an Oromo grace. Such action should not entail shame but should earn the respect of every Oromo for understanding and giving priority to the cause of forty million Oromos. The others have no choice but to continue the struggle against occupation and for the goal of true independence.

The Ethiopian State and the Future of the Oromos: The Struggle for ‘Self-Rule and Shared-Rule’

Merera Gudina

“Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please...” Karl Marx- Eighteenth Brumaire. This paper argues that the incorporation of the bulk of the Oromo people into the expanding empire state of Ethiopia in the second half of the 19th century on un-equal terms and the Oromos own historic expansion in the earlier centuries across the vast land - today known as Ethiopia, have created a complex dual history which in turn has complicated the Oromo people’s quest for the right to self-determination and democracy. The paper further argues that if the debate - which way forward - that has lived with us for a generation is to be answered by our generation, the complex reality regarding the dual history of the Oromo nation as well as the existing global politics should be taken into consideration, and the struggle of our people should be focused on how to achieve both ‘self-rule’ and ‘shared-rule.’

Consequently, this in turn needs a formulation of a common rallying agenda for all Oromo democratic forces and the people at large. Put differently, in the formulation and articulation of a common agenda for our people: two historic compromises have to be made – i.e. coming of all independent Oromo movements to the middle road as well as the courage to link up the Oromo people’s struggle for ‘self-rule’ with the Ethiopian peoples struggle for ‘shared-rule’ based on a universally accepted democratic principle of ‘one person, one vote’. Such historic compromises can only be made through a readiness to build a democratic common home. Today, the most serious challenge for Oromo movements is the courage to leave behind the historical injustice done to our people - without necessarily forgetting it, and devise a political structure that ensures majority-rule. And, if history had given the Amhara elite the chance of leading the making of modern Ethiopia on unequal terms in the second half of the 19th century, there is no reason why the same history can’t now avail the Oromo elite the opportunity of playing a leading role in the remaking of Ethiopia on equal terms in the 21st century. As such the challenge to all of us is the challenge either to accept and lead the common struggle for democracy or reject and elongates the misery of millions of our people. It is the thinking of this writer that both geography and demography support the Oromo movements to lead the struggle for democracy in the country by paying less cost while our shying away from assuming such a historical role is what has undoubtedly elongated the birth pang of

democratic Ethiopia and the misery of our people. The central question now is: are we ready to assume such a role?

Imagining Oromia and Ethiopia: Reflections on Political and Scholarly Discourse on Oromo and Ethiopian Identities

Mekuria Bulcha

By and large, the Oromo people have been represented negatively in Ethiopianist discourse. This image of the Oromo people which has been depicted in Ethiopianist literature since the sixteenth century is now being challenged by Oromo and expatriate scholars. The literature produced by these scholars during the last two decades has brought to light new knowledge about the Oromo people, their culture and history. The number of articles and books produced on Oromo culture and history is not only increasing in quantity but also maintaining international academic standards. The aim of this presentation is to analyze the role of Ethiopianist discourse and Oromo counter-discourse in shaping the on-going Oromo people's struggle for the recognition of their identity and rights.

Continued Human Rights Violations in Oromia and What We Can Do About It

Mohammed Hassen

Although the Ethiopian military regime was overthrown fifteen years ago, human rights violations in Oromia in 2006 is as bad as it was in 1991. This paper attempts to assess the conditions of civil and political rights of the Oromo people under the current TPLF dominated Ethiopian regime. It provides an overview of serious human rights violations in Oromia in the past decade and half. It shows how the TPLF leaders, who learned from the mistakes of the previous military regime's practice of keeping records of human rights violations, have invented a new method of killing people without leaving any record about it. This paper argues that it is the duty of all of us to do our level best, as much as possible, to document the records of those killings for the purpose of bringing them to the attention of international community and also for keeping them for posterity. The paper also touches on the inability of the Oromo Diaspora to support even the activities of Oromia support Group in documenting human rights violations in Oromia and discusses what can be done about it. In all, the paper shows that in the past fifteen years the TPLF dominated Ethiopian regime has been using the governmental resources at its disposal for the purpose of destroying all independent Oromo organizations and killing their innocent supporters without provoking international outrage. What can be done about this situation will be stressed in this paper.

HIV/AIDS Current Status and Its Disastrous Implications in Rural and Urban Areas of Oromia

Numery Abdulhamid Suflan

This paper is an update on the current information available on HIV/AIDS pandemic situation in Oromia, where many Oromos are under food crises, of which people living with HIV/AIDS are most affected. The paper is based on data from 34 sites in Oromia, of which 28 are urban sites and 6 are rural. Sentinel surveillance data are used to arrive at the prevalence rate. The 2001 estimate of HIV prevalence in Oromia is 7.3%. Urban HIV prevalence rates in Oromia continue to be high at 13.7% while the HIV prevalence for rural areas of Oromia is 5%. It has to be noted that 5% HIV prevalence in rural areas of Oromia where intervention measures in rolling back the pandemic have not yet penetrated deep into the rural community that means a bigger percentage with the worst future scenarios. HIV prevalence for Finfinnee is estimated to be 15.6%. The number of persons living with HIV/AIDS in

2001 is estimated at 2.2 million, including 2 million adults and 200,000 children. Approximately 10 percent of these or 219,400 are full blown AIDS cases. The highest prevalence of HIV is seen in the age group of 15 to 24 years, representing recent infection. The age and sex distribution of AIDS cases shows that about 91% of infections occur among adults between 15 and 49 years. The age range encompasses the most economically productive segment of the population, so the epidemic impacts negatively on labor productivity. It has specially destroyed agricultural workers and curtailed the plots of land under agricultural use. Work time is lost through frequent absenteeism and decreased capacity to do normal work as the disease advances. There are also social consequences of the epidemic as caregivers and income generating members of the family die leaving behind orphans and other dependents. These events lead to an aggravation of the problems of social instability, poverty and food crises like the current situation in Oromia where millions of rural people are still dependant on food aid.

Shared History, Shared Challenges and Shared Future: The Case of Sidama and Oromo

Seyoum Hameso

In this paper, I explore the shared history, challenges and future facing the Sidama and Oromo people. While the presentation dwells on the two great peoples, the same analysis hold truth for most of the oppressed nations of today's Ethiopia. Under "shared history", we look into significant facets of life between the two peoples: politics of conquest which undermined Gada and Luwa system, the cultural heritage founded on Cushitic roots, economic interdependence with vast implications for peoples, as well as the geographic proximity and location based largely in the South. Under "shared challenges", we explore the internal political dynamics of both peoples, the behavior of oppressive Ethiopian regimes towards these people, the interplay of regional and global actors in relation to the aspiration and needs of the oppressed. The shared history and challenges in turn call for shared efforts to bring about favorable and mutually beneficial change for both peoples in particular and the oppressed in general. The belief of this author is that the fate of Oromos is inextricably linked to the fate of Sidama and other oppressed people. The freedom of Oromo will translate to fundamental transformation of the Ethiopian polity which will positively impact on the settlement of the basic conflict between the oppressive state and oppressed peoples. The freedom one is the default freedom for the rest. The building blocks of prosperity, respects for rights are also shared. On the basis of this analysis, the presentation concludes with proposals for action.

The Oromo and the Great Illusion of CUD

Siegfried Pausewang

It is likely that most of the leaders of CUD were seriously convinced, on the evening of May 15, 2005, that they had won a plain majority of the seats in the House of Representatives. The narrative on the election is today as half a year ago: The Government won the election, but the major opposition party CUD claims it has won, but its victory was stolen. There is no way any more to find the true percentages of the votes. By delaying the counting and computing, EPRDF gave room to rigging and threw the results into doubt. But CUD is an urban Amhara populist movement on the political right. Why is nobody seriously analysing the obvious fact that for various reasons its programme is not at all acceptable to a majority of the rural people in the South, particularly the Oromo, but also most rural people in Southern region and others? There is almost no mention of a third position, in between those of the government and of CUD.

Yet it is not accidental that CUD leaders could be misled by the euphoria of the last week of the election campaign in Addis Ababa, especially the huge public rally on May 8. CUD leaders think in the tradition of the "All Amhara" movement. As Sevir Chernetsov pointed out in a seminal article in 1993, the term

“Amhara” comprises two different groups: the rural Amhara and an urban class of people from different ethnic origin, assimilated into an Amhara culture. Originally a culture of the court, it turned into an urban class with the expansion of education and the urbanisation of the Imperial court. The urban Amhara believe to represent all the Amhara, and above that, the progressive parts of the Ethiopian people, who believe in integrating all groups into one Ethiopian nation.

Nobody even seems to reflect that the program of CUD had no chance to attract the genuine votes of other parts of Ethiopia than the urban centres and some Amhara and Gurage sympathisers. If more than a maximum of 20 to 25 per cent voted for CUD, it must be rural protest votes. Votes from people who thought that enough is enough, that anything else could only be better than the local member of EPRDF. Sure, a protest vote is as relevant a vote as any. But CUD could not be a realistic alternative to EPRDF, as long as it retains an urban political programme. As soon as it would get a chance to implement its programme, new conflicts would be bound to come to the fore. However, up to now, whatever public debate there is in Ethiopia, reflects the views of EPRDF and “the opposition”, most vocally presented and represented by CUD. It is therefore imperative that the Oromo, as the largest ethnic group in the country, bring their views and their interests into the public debate in Ethiopia. They can not afford to leave the field open for CUD to pretend to speak for all Ethiopians.

Human Rights in Post-Zenawi Ethiopia

Trevor Truman

Imagine Zenawi and Mengistu are on trial at the International Criminal Court. Imagine that the oppressive state machines which they established and strengthened are dismantled. Is the battle for human rights in Ethiopia over? Is it won? No. This optimistic but nonetheless realistic scenario means only that the first battle in a long and strenuous struggle for human rights can begin. What are the human rights which concern us? Civil and political rights – the rights to life, freedom from detention without trial, freedom from enforced disappearance, freedom from torture, free association and free speech – seem obvious enough. But how can one of the poorest countries in the world hope to achieve rights which are currently being denied to residents of the UK and USA? In the ‘war on terror’, detention without trial, torture and the shooting and killing of innocent suspects are occurring in the UK, USA, Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. Economic and social rights – to safeguarding one’s own environment, to safe, healthy and productive employment, freedom from treatable and preventable diseases – are being denied to most of the world’s citizens by the seemingly unstoppable forces of globalisation.

At what level are we concerned with human rights? The individual must obviously be free from torture. But what should be the fate of the individual who has been a jailer or who has tortured? Imagine the son of a poor farmer who has been coerced into the security forces by circumstances and threats to his family but who, at some risk, has enabled one or two victims to escape. What happens to the ‘PDO’ member who began because he hoped to better the lot of his people but got embroiled in unfair distribution of food or medicines in order to avoid persecution? What should be the fate of EPRDF members who merely stood by while atrocities occurred? Are they qualitatively more culpable than those who fled the country and did nothing while cosseted in Diaspora communities? Are some peoples or nationalities to be collectively punished because they enjoyed relative prosperity or were favoured for development? The risk of widespread killings, even genocide, still exists in Ethiopia – at least the preconditions are present. Globalised greed and capital are probably responsible for more death and poor quality of life than any individual or party, but how is that battle to be fought? Who can stand up to the IMF and World Trade Organisation?

None of these questions are easily answered and only rarely will issues be seen as black and white rather than shades of grey. There will be responsibilities to be considered and decisions which have to be made by individuals, small communities, large communities, civil and political organisations and by peoples at all levels of social hierarchy. Punishment or rehabilitation, truth commissions, restitution, retribution, restoration, repair and reparation – the future will involve extremely complex and difficult decision-

making by all levels of society if more than a few are to be satisfied with the outcome.

I will argue that absolute respect for essential human rights (which is absent from western political discourse) and the tenets of Ghandi involving forgiveness and prime concern for the poorest in society (again absent from western discourse) are fundamental in helping individuals and state structures navigate this quagmire.

Indigenous Knowledge, Coping Mechanisms and Survival Strategies Striving Against Drought and Food Insecurity in Oromia

Worku Burayu

Farmers' indigenous knowledge systems striving against drought and food insecurity, and their coping mechanisms and survival strategies are not adequately known in Oromiya. Research was undertaken in 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 years in selected sites of Jimma, East Wollega, West Shoa and East Shoa zones of Oromiya to investigate the potential for using farmers' indigenous knowledge in relation to their strategies to cope with natural resources degradation, drought and food insecurity. The methodology involved some forms of 'ethnobiology' study. How farmers perceive the environment they are working in, how they organize themselves, what sources of information exists for the generation of new knowledge, and the capacity of indigenous knowledge to form the basis of a management plan were covered. Semi-structured interviews and techniques of participatory rural appraisal were also employed to collect the data. Results clearly revealed that farmers faced a number of constraints in pursuing their livelihood and hence in decision making of their agricultural production activities. Drought has increased over the years and farmers were unable to recover from the shock of drought to their livelihood systems. Moisture stress, poor soil fertility and weeds are perceived the three most agricultural productivity limiting factors. Farmers were reluctant to do any soil and water conservation measures primarily because of shaky land ownership. It was further noted that farmers have developed a range of indigenous coping strategies, through trial and error, to combat their constraints. They have been able to cope with drought through changing their crop and livestock management strategies, adjusting soil and moisture conservation systems and re-arrangements in source of incomes. Throughout the fieldwork, it was evident that social sharing arrangements for labor and oxen are extremely important in the livelihood system. The coping mechanisms and strategies that farmers set out to cope with natural resources and crop related risks are valuable from agricultural development aspects and provide a basis for building a technology that accommodates farmers' indigenous knowledge. Participatory community based approaches involving the stakeholders in planning and implementation and revisiting of land policy are necessary in order to create a higher ownership attitude and to invest on natural resources conservation. Sustainable agricultural development and food security likely to be obtained if farmers' indigenous knowledge and strategies better understood and every development workers could work in harmony with them.

Afaan Oromo, Hudhaan-qabaa Habashaa Harkaa Bayee Afaan Kabajamaa Ittiin Barreeffamu Ta'uu Isaa

Xilahun Gamta

Mootummooti habashaa, afaan oromoo lafa irraa balleessanii, afaan amaaraa iddoo isaa buusuuf hanga 1974tti danuu tattaaffataa turan. Burokiraasii isaanii keessatti, afaan Oromootiin barreessuun hafee, akka ittiin hin dubbatamne iyyuu godhanii turan. Isa onnoomee ittiin dubbatu ammoo, akka nama yakka hojjateetti ilaalu turan.

Garuu, dhiibbaan qabsoo saba keenyaa itti jabaataa dhufnaan, bara 1974rii eegalee hanga 1991tti afaan oromoo raadiyoonii isaanii irratti akka dubbatamu fi qubee isaaniitiin akka barreeffamu eeyyamuuf dirqaman.

Dhiibbaa jalqabame sana, goototni oromoo qawwee dhaan caalaa jabeessanii bara 1991 Finfinnee eega seenanii booddee, afaan oromoo TViratti dubbatamu jalqabe. Kana qofa osoo hin ta'in, qubeen keenya inni dur laf-jala ittiin barreeffamaa ture ifatti seeraan beekame. Qubee keenya balleessuuf, tattaaffiin diinnii dagaagina afaan oromoo godhes, birmannaa saba keenyaatiin ha moowamuu iyyuu malee, dagaaginnii qubee akka inni lafa irra foqoqu gochuun hin hafne. Gabaabaatti, akka an ilaalutti, qubee keenya irraa karaa diina faccisuu irratti, sabi keenya tokko ta'eera. Har'a, barsiiftota, barattoonnii, ogeessoti beekumsa addaa addaa qabanu, waldaaleen amantii, hawaasotni oromoo, dhaabbileen polotikaa addaa addaa, qaamooleen sabquunamtii, hojjatonninii fi qonnaan bulooti hundinu qubee keenya dagaagsuu irratti bobba'nii jiru.
