

## Table of Contents

Table of content.....	2
Editor`s Note.....	4
Opening Remarks	
Abebe Adugna, PhD .....	7
 Keynote Speaker I	
Getachew J. Demekssa, PhD	
Mootuuma Oromiyya Ijaaruun Dirqama .....	9
 Keynote Speaker II	
Professor, William I. Robinson	
The Crisis Of Global Capitalism: Contextualizing The Oromo Struggle .....	24
 Kulani Jalata	
The Role of Revolutionary Oromo Artists in Building Oromumma: The Case of Usmayyoo Musa and Ebiissa Addunya .....	40.
 Aregash M. Dheressa	
Lack of Press freedom in Ethiopia in General and Oromia in Particular .....	50
 Professor, Peri M. Klemm	
Tying Oromo History: The Manipulation of Dress and Adornment During the Late 19 <sup>th</sup> Century .....	68.
 Professor, Asafa Jalata	
External Legitimacy, Authoritarianism, And State Terrorism: The Triple Enemies Of Peace And Development In Ethiopia .....	81
 Habtamu Dugo	
Transforming The Oromo News Media Into The Oromo National Institution Of Public Opinion .....	85.
 Jimma Tufa	
Notes of a Native Son: Qoqaa Before the Dam and the Lake .....	100.
 Shibru D. Fufa, PhD	
Trends in the HIV/AIDS Epidemics in the Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Oromia	110....
 Mardasa Tolesa	
Shortage of Clean Drinking Water in Oromia .....	
 Begna F. Dugassa, PhD	

Public Health Impacts of High Fluoride in Water and Soil: the case of Rift Valley Region in Oromia .....  
PROCEEDINGS OF THE 2010 OSA MID-YEAR CONFERENCE

Haile Hirpa, PhD, the OSA President  
Opening Remarks.....

Professor, Daniel Ayana

Nations of Intent the Oromo, Ethiopia, and the “Other Ethiopians”: The Importance of Elections .....

## Editorial Notes

This document contains the Proceedings of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Oromo Studies Association (OSA) Conference held at the University of Atlanta, on July 31 to 1<sup>st</sup> August 2009 and the mid- year conference held in Minneapolis Minnesota, on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010. In the 2009 Annual OSA conference and in the 2010 mid- year conference, several interesting papers were presented. The presenters dealt with issues surrounding the social, economical, political, and cultural as well as public health matters in Oromia.

Knowledge is a socially constructed phenomenon and knowledge is one of the areas about which the colonizers and the colonized have had conflicts. Knowledge and power are intertwined. The OSA annual and mid- year conference presenters constructed knowledge and produced data that challenges conventional colonial knowledge. Indeed, they produced knowledge that promotes the empowerment of the Oromo people. In keeping with longstanding OSA culture, here we produce the proceedings on CD in order to disseminate such knowledge, and make it available for readers and researchers.

The first keynote speaker is Dr. Getachew Demekssa who is a parliamentarian with a PhD degree in political science. In his speech Dr. Demekssa highlights the importance of the formation of the state of Oromia. He challenges the audience with the idea that making Oromia a free and independent state should be an obligation of all Oromo people.

The second keynote speaker, Professor Robenson, examines the ways that Global power provides ideological legitimacy and political support to maintain contemporary power relations. In doing so he highlights the complex challenges that the Oromo people face.

Addee Kulan Jalata writes about the biographies and the works of two vibrant Oromo artists- Usmayyoo Musa and Ebissa Addunya, who were imprisoned, tortured and killed by Ethiopian government security forces. As Addee Kulani analyses the songs of these artists she captures their aspirations, hopes, and dreams.

Addee Aregash Dheresa, a former journalist, takes a close look at issues surrounding a free press and how its absence has affected the press in Oromia. As a person who has worked with the Barisa NewsPaper, she reveals the politics surrounding a free press in Ethiopia. She argues that a free press is an essential tool to educate the public and bring social transformation. Adeee Aregash maintains that the press is more restricted in Oromia than in any other region in the Ethiopian empire.

Professor, Peri M. Klemm took a close look at the ways the Oromo people have kept their identity hidden from Abyssinian power and transmitted their symbolic identity in their dresses and *gaadi* (the leather strap that ties the cow's back legs when milking) for generations. She highlights the ways that Oromos have managed to manipulate colonial power.

Professor Jalata takes a close look at the ways that the European powers gave legitimacy to the Abyssinians. He argues that the Abyssinian Empire is authoritarian and is in effect a terrorist state in the Horn of Africa. The Ethiopian empire was formed and maintained not by the will of

people but by terrorizing the people in the region. It is therefore is an obstacle to the socio-economic development in the region.

Obbo Habtamu Dugo talks about the importance of the media and the need to transform the Oromo media and develop an Oromo National Institution of Public Opinion. As a media person, Obbo Habtamu highlights the ways media work influences public opinion; he stresses the importance of organizing the Oromo media and raising awareness on issues that are relevant to the Oromo people.

Obbo Jimma Tufa, who was born and raised around Lake Qoqaa area, uses satellite images and shows what has happened and is happening to the Hawas River, Lake Qoqa and surrounding regions. Having in mind the chemical pollution that has put many Oromos at health risk in that area, he links the ways the Ethiopian government's social policy designed from the Abyssinian perspective has hurt the Oromo people.

Dr. Shibru Fufa, takes a close look at the trends of the HIV/AIDS epidemics in Sub-Saharan Africa and Oromia in particular. Dr. Fufa makes it clear that in Oromia there is no reliable data about HIV/AIDS epidemics. The absence of reliable data makes difficult to analyse, predict and set up action plans.

Obbo Mardasa Tolesa's presentation is on the shortage of clean drinking water in Oromia. In his paper first he highlights the health status of people in Ethiopia and links it to the absence of clean water and malnutrition. The author shows the proportion of people in the Ethiopian empire who have access to clean water.

Dr. Begna Dugassa argues that in the Rift Valley region of Oromia, in the soil and water, fluoride levels are very high. Drinking water high in fluoride causes fluoride toxicity- and accounts for several health issues. Fluoride toxicity affects teeth, bones, kidney, liver, suppresses the immune system and makes people docile; as well, it mentally incapacitates children. He argues that addressing public health issues cannot be separated from the issue of social justice, and that the Oromo people need to make more efforts to empower themselves and address their own public health problems.

Professor Daniel Ayana in his paper discusses that although the TPLF is critical to the former Ethiopian regimes, they are determined to maintain the territorial boundaries of Menilek's Empire and political power relation. Despite claims of federalism and democracy, the TPLF tightly controls the affairs of all regions as tightly as the previous regimes. Prof. Ayana argues that the process of creating independent Oromiya and a future democratized Ethiopia is interrelated and suggests taking the issue of election in Ethiopia seriously.

If we conceptualize that knowledge is a power, then, decimating information is facilitating knowledge construction, hence, it is one the ways through which people can empower themselves. More specifically asking research questions and constructing knowledge from the Oromo perspective, invalidates the Abyssinian colonial agenda and motives and this creates favourable conditions for the Oromo people to empowerment them selves. As you can see from the proceeding, the presenters looked at the condition in which the Oromo people live from different angles. One group of presenters looked at the ways the Ethiopian government social

policies overtly and covertly deny the need of Oromo people. The second group looked at the challenges the Oromo people face, which raise awareness about the complexities of their problems. The third looked at the strength of the Oromo people- the ways they resisted and resisting the Abyssinian domination - hinting they can still make their culture as a resort.

Finally I would like to thank the presenters and encourage others to participate and contribute their part to bring a just world in the Horn of Africa- where there is no war but peace, no authoritarian rule but democratic state, no famine but prosperity.

**Thank you**

**Begna Dugassa, PhD, the OSA President Elect**

**Ababa Adugna, PhD**



## MOOTUUMAA OROMIYYA IJAARUUN DIRQAMA

**Getachew Jigi Demekssa, PhD**

Keynote speech made at OSA conference 2009, Atlanta Georgia, USA

”OSAn Oromoo beektotaa gosa hunda of keessatti amatee waan jiruuf rakko Oromoo hunda furuuf dandeeti waan qabuuf rakko kana keessa akka nu basuu dhamacha beektoon Oromoo hund illee akka OSA cimnaa dhabatan ni gaafaadha”

**Kabajamaa Dura ta’aa OSA DR Ababa Adunya**

**Kabajamtoota Miseensoota OSA**

**Kabajamtoota Keessummoota Hirmattoota,**

Guyyaa Har’aa kana barreeffama **Tokkummaan Mootuummaa Oromomiyaa Bilisomtee Ijaaruun dirqama** jedhu waltajjii kana irratti dhiheessuu fi rakkoo uummata Oromoo isin waliin mari’achuuf carraa naa kennameef maqaa uummata Oromoo fi GPOn qaama kaanaf galata dhiyesuu barbaada.

Rakkoo Oromoo hundaa ni beektu, waggaa 20 ol qoorannoo fi xiinxala bala’a fi dheeraan dhihaachaa turuu anis nan dhagaa’a. Kanaafuu ani dhaamsaa fi furmaata maal goonu waan jedhu firemwork xiqqaa waliin dhiheessee yaada namoonni dhiheessan hundaa akka irratti mari’anun barbaada.

Uummatni Oromoo Gaanfa Afriikaa keessatti bilisummaa dhabee rakkoo dhala namaaf hin malle keessatti dararamaa jiru kun beektoota Oromoo irraa abdi guddaa Eegata. Oromoon bilisummaa aragtee biyya isaa irratti abbaa ta’ee beektoota isaa walin guddina biyyaa kara hunda fiduuf of amantan hojjetee jireenya isaa jijjiiruuf hawwii gudaan nu Eegachaa jira. Fedhii uummta kana fashalesuf diin waan hunda gochaa jira.

Ergaan koo inni guddan Wayyaaneen Qabsoo Bilisummaa fi Qabsoo siyaasaa hunda dabalatee fulaa isaa jijjiree gara waldhaabdi Amanta, fi Gandatti akka jijjiramu gochuuf karoora ol’anatti qoopheesun yeroo dheeraaf hojjecha turan. Karoora isaan kana salphatti kan hojii irraa olchuu kan danda’an Qabsoo Oromoo kessatti ta’ee jira. Uummani biyyati hundi qabsoo bilisummaa fi qabsoo mootuummaa jijjiru dhisaan wal dhaabdee amanta fi Gandan hunda’ee irratti akka xiyyefatan godhame. Biyya keessatti saba fi sablamiin hundi lamumman utuu hin tanee, Amantan ykn Naannoon akka wal goodan, akka wal loolan gocha jiru. Fknf wal dhaabdee amanta Iluabba Bora, Arsi, Wallaga, Harargee kessatti deemsifame. Naannoon ammo Gujii fi Boorana, Somale fi Oromoo, Gumuzii fi Oromoo, Afari fi Oromoo, Amhara fi Oromoo kkf adeemsifama jira. Biyya ala fi dhaabbilee qabsa’oota keessatti ammo Nannoo fi Amanta akka baballatuu gochuun



Di'aspora ala hundi fi dhaabbileen siyaasa huda gidutti digumsa geesisa jiru. Ijoolee Oromoo hedduun immo erga diina kana utuu hin hubatiin rawwacha jiru. Waan kun asi irratti qoofa dubanee waan xumuruu mitti garu bakka geenye hundatti gocha kana hubachisun barbaachisadha.

Diinni Oromoo soba dhugaa fakkeessee odeessuun aanga'oota addunyaatti michoomee gargaarsaa fi deggersa argatee ittiin waggoota hedduuf nu garboonfate. Oromoon ammoo haqa qabu wal hubachiisee wal tumsuun rakkoo isaa Addunyaatti ibsachuu dadhabuun isaa nama gaddisiisa. Rakkoon kun kan irraa maddu wal tumsuu dhabuu, odeeffannoo wal jijjiiruu dhabuu, caasaa adda addaa diriirfachuu ahanqachuu, miidiyaa fi qunnamtii cicciimaa uummachuu dhabuu, qunnamtii kanuma jirutti iyyuu fayyadamnee yakka diinaa saaxiluu irra olola wal irratti oofuun wal dhadhabsiisuu ta'e. Kottaa haa mari'annuu diina irratti ololuu moo of irratti ololuutu furmata? Yaada furmaataa maddisiisuu fi hojii qabatamaa hojjechuu dhiifnee waan nu diigu odeessuun hojii guddaa taatee jirti, rakkoon kan dubbatamuuf furmata barbaaduuf malee rakkoo odeessuu qofaan furmata ta'uu hin danda'u.

Paltookiin qabsoo akka gargaruuf yaadamee baname utuu dhaaba waggaa 40 diinni ittfayyadamee utuu diiguu fi uummata Oromoo facaasuu argaa jirra. Paaltoki keessaan diinni gugatee ilmaan abbaa tokkoo Oromoo kan wal nyaachisaa jiru, yamuu ta'uu miidiyaan kun faayidaa guddaa akkuma qabu ergaa diinaa dabarsuun illee balaa guddaa qabaachuu isaa hubannee hin jirru. Raadiyoo, TV, fi website dhaan kan odeessu rakkoo, hama, diiggaa, olola, yoo foyyee qabate wareegama qabsa'ootaa dhageenya. Oduun baqattootaa biyya keessaa fi biyya alaa, kan dhaabaa fi kan uummtaa rakkoo qoofa ta'ee jira. Beekaan keenya kan odeessu rakkoo, hogganni kan odeessu rakkoo! Gabaasa fi ergaan emailiin argannu hundaa rakkoo hima. Mariin godhamu waa'ee rakkoo, xumurri isaa rakkoo dabalataa fi diigumsaa ta'ee jira. Namni walga'ii deemu qoophaa'ee kan dhaqu diguu ykn hooggana balaleefachuuf malee yaada furmataa kan maddisiisu nama murasa ta'aa jira. Nama yaada furmataa haaraa maddisiisu illee inaaaffaan yaada isaa dhaga'uu diduun rakkoo uummata hameessa jiru. Uummtaa keenyaaf fi hegeree Oromiyaaf yaadi dhiyataa turan hundi lafatti gatamanii rakkoon uummatichaa akka itti dheeratu taasifame. Dantaa sabaa fi uummataaf hojjechuun hafee dantaa murnaaf fedhii nam-tokkeef gugachuutu babala'te. Kanaaf adeemsa akkanaa asi irrati dhaabnee Dhaabbilee Oromoo hundi tokkummaan gara yaada furmataa fi hojii qabatama Tokkummaan Ummaanee Mootuummaa Oromomiyyaa Ijaaruun dirqama qabna jedha. Dhaamsi koo iini jalqabba kana, muranoo fi murtee keessantuu Oromoo hunda irraa barbadama. Wagga dhufuu utuu hin tanee deebi atatama barbaadna.

Waan ani dubadhu kana hin beektan jechuu koo miti garuu, gaaffii, haawwii fi feedhi bilisummaa uummatichi qabu fi hangan irraa quba qabu isiinti dhaamachun fedha. Kanaaf rakkoo uummata kanaa irratti xiyyefannoo gochuun akka irratti mari'annee furmaata barbadnuuf waanan gudunfadhee keessaa xiiqqoo dhiheessuu barbaada:-

### 1. Rakkoo waliigala fi yaakaa uummata keenyaa irra gahaa jiru

Uummatni Oromoo Miliyoona 40n lakkaawamuu abba biyyuumaa isaa fi mirga hundaa molqamee, seera ittin bulmaataa qabu dhorkamee, qabeenya isaa irratti ormii abbaa itti ta'ee, misooma fi guddina biyyaa keessatti akka hin hirmanne taasifamee jira. Afaan fi aadaan Oromoo akka dhokatu taasifame, tokkummaan isaa diigamee, mirga uumamaan inni qabu irra molqame jira. Oromoo hidhun guyya hara'aa kana ilee daran haamata jira.

### A. Mirga uummata Oromoo sarbamee fi dararama irra gahaa jiru

Dhalli namaa mirga dhalootaa fi seeraan egamuufii qabu qaba. Uummatni Oromoo garuuu biyya isaa keessatti lammii lammafaa ta'uu gadi ta'ee seera addunyaa mirga bineensaa kunuunsuuf labsame illee dhabee jira. Jaarsa jaarti, dhalaa fi dhiraa, beekaa fi wallaalaa barataa fi qootatee bulaan hundi Oromoo ta'ee waan dhalate qoofaf cubbuu fi yakki biyya lafaa hundi irratti raawwatamaa jira.

Waan na namadeese keessaa tokko filannoo wayyaanee darbe irratti namoota Qinjjit deggeran Finfinnee keessatti ajjeefaman 193 midiyaa fi uummata Addunyaa biratti yammuu iyyaatamuuf Oromiyaa keessatti wayta lubbuun Oromotaa 400 ol ta'u bade addunyaa jalaa dhokachuu isaa ti.

Mootummaan Ameerikaa goolessitoota/Terrorists/ ittiin lolla jeedhee meeshaa ammayaa fi Konkolaatota ammayaa inni waayaneef kenne meeshaa ittiin uummata Oromoo fi uummatoota Gaanfa Afriikaa biroo ittiin fixan taasifame. Sirna dimookraasii ittiin ijaarra jechuun gargaarsa wayyaaneen mootummoota dhihaa irraa guurtu sochii dimookraasii ittiin hukkaamsuuf oolfame.

Bulchiinsi pirezidanti Buush diktaatora Ityoophiyyaan walii galee yakka barattootaa fi uummata Oromoo irratti raawwatamee ukkaamsee hambse. Ameerikaan deggersa Diktaatora lubbuu kumatamaa fixaa jiru kanaaf gootu amma illee itti fuftee jirti. Fixiinsi lubbuu geggefamee:-

1. Fincila Diiddaa Garbumaan wal qabatee lubbuun barattootaa fi uummta nagaa dhume guyyaa tokko ifa ba'a,
2. Finfinnee Magaalaa guddittii Oromiyaa jijjiramu mormachuun lubbuu bade, hiidhaa fi hojii irra ari'amuun;
3. Deggertoota ABO jedhamuun Godina Oromiyya hunda keessatti Oromootni dhoksa fi ifatti dhuman Harargee (Gaara Sufi)tti kan dhuman dabalatee dhokatee hafe;
4. Filannoon wal qabatee Miseensoon WFDO fi OBK Oromiyya keessatti dhoksaadhan halkan guuramanii ajjeefaman fi guyyaa saafaa kan ajjeefaman manatu beeka;
5. Seena biyyati keessati Miseensoon Paarlaama 12 lammi Oromoo irra yeroo tokko dhibamani biyya ba'uun fi uumman kumoota heedun lakka'amu biyya ari'atamu ;
6. Uummtaa fi Uummata Amantaa fi Gosaan walitti naaquudhan walitti buu'iinsa dhalateen kan dhume kuma heduutti lakkaawama;
7. Seeran ala murte malee Oromo 40,000 mana hidhat darbtamu fi murte siyyassan Oromooti du'ii murta'uun isaa bor wayyaanee mal akka isaan eguu waan beekanf.

Mootummaan TPLF diimokiraasiin biyya Itoophiyaa keessatti akka hin hojjenne sababa inni ittisuuf hanga tokko isnii himuun barbaada:-

- a. Mallas Zeenaawwii 'Silent Killer' fixiinsa sanyii hiriyya hin qabne waan raawwatee jiruuf yoo tayitaa irra bu'e waan addunyaan kanaan dura hin beeknetu ifa ba'aa;

- b. Mallas qabeenya biyyaattii harka 80% ol deggertoota isaa waliin dhuunfatee waan jiruuf gaafas kunis saaxilamee harkaa bahuuf deema. Waan ta'eef aangoo gadi dhiisuu hin barbaadu; Kubaniyan TPLF 1600 ol ta'uu malaqa biyya basa jiru ;
- c. Sabaa fi sab-lamoota walitti buusuun lubbuu hedduu waan balleesseef gocha duguuginsa sanyiin gaafatamuun isaas waan hin oolle ta'uu waan beekuuf; Lammi biyyati keessa Oromoo qoofaa irra meshaa waraana hikachisun Oromoo ficisisan ;
- d. Deggersa uummataa waan hin qabneef sirna diimokiraasiin filaannoon dhuggaa yoom illee akka jiraatu hin barbaadu;
- e. Lammiwwan ollaa keenyaa Somaalota sababa tokko malee daangaa ce'ee fixiinsa dhala namaa dalageef akka hin gaafatamneef taayitaa irraa bu'uu hin barbaadu;

Mallas Zeenaawwii fi TPLF filannoo bara 2005 irratti injifatamanii garuu humnaan aangoo irra turan. Ummatni akka isaan hin barbaanne filannoo kana irratti sirriitti itti agarsiise. Aanga'ooti addunyaa keessattuu USA fi UK murtii uummataa kana irra tarkaanfachuun deggersa isaan diktaatora kanaaf godhan nama gaddisiisa. Yakka dugguugaa sanyii dhala namaa irratti Itoophiyaa fi biyya ollaa keessatti raawwatame hundatti kan itti gaafatamu Mallas Zeenaawwii ti. Sababi isaas tarkaanfiin kami iyyuu biyyattii keessatti rawwatamu murtee Mallas malee waan hin rawwatamneef. Kana yammuu jennu namootni gochaan kun yakka ta'uu isaa utuu beekanii murtee kana raawwatan hundi gaafatama jalaa hin bahan.

## **B. Oromoon Misooma Dinagdee fi Hawaasummaa irraa ala ta'uu isaa;**

Qabeenya Oromoo mootummaa Federaalaan guuramee galu keessaa illee Bajata deggersa Naannoo Oromiyaaaf kennamu madaala kamiin iyyuu xiqqaa dha. Bajata waggaatti federaala irra Gargaarsa (subside) lammii Tigiraay tokkoof qarshii 500 yeroo ramadamu lammii Oromoo tokkoof garuu waggaatti qarshii 70 hin guutu. Kana keessaa immoo Yeroon bajata gadi dhiisuu daangessuun erga yeroon darbee gadi dhisu, booda immoo hanqina humna raawwachiisu dhabiinsaan hojii irra oluu dadhabe jechuun Miliyoona hedduu bajata gubate jedhanii naannoo Tigraayitti ergu.

Bu'uura misoomaaf kan oolan karaan, ibsaan, telekomunikeshiniin, bishaan qulquluun, jaal'isiin, diirreen xiyyaaraa, Oromiyaa keessatti oduun malee qabatamaan hojjetame hin jiru. Qonnaan Oromiyaa keessaa Xaa'oo utuu biyyoon hin qoorataminii fi xaa'oo sadarkaa isaa hin egane dhaabbata daldalaa TPLFn gurguramu qotee bulaa Oromootti diriqiin itti gurguruun lafa Oromiyaya summii biyyoo balleessuuuf (Soil Acidity) akka saaxilamu godhanii jiru. Misooma qonnaa Oromiyaa keessaa akka kanaan badee qootatee bulaan Oromoo seenaa isaa keessatti beela hin beekne belaa saaxilamee jira.

Tigiraay keessatti karoorri Barnootaa, fayyaa, bishaan dhugatii uummata waliin ga'uuf midhaan nyaataan of danda'uu sagantaa addunyaa Miliyeniyeem bara 2015 xumramuuf karoorfame mootummaan naannoo Tigraayiiif waan hundaa guuteefii ammuma iyyuu xumramee jira. Kan Oromiyaa garuu hin egalamne yoon jedhe hin dogogorre, Miidiyaatti dubachuu fi waan NGO tokko tokko hojjetan jiraachuu ni mala garuu, Godina 17, Aanaalee 200 Gandoota 6200 ol ta'an keessatti manni barumsaa fi Kellaan fayyaa ganda hundaa wal ga'ee jedhame yoo gaafatame nami

mirkaneesu hin jiru. Uummati 25,000 Buufata fayyaa tokko uummati 75,000 Hospitaala ammayyaa tokko argachuu qaba kan jedhuu karoorri kun Tigraayi keessatti malee Oromiyaa keessatti hin hojjenne. Jal'isiin Tigraay ganda hundaa keessatti humna mootora xixiqqaan qotee bulaan fayyadamuu Oromoof maaliif hin yaadamne. Horsiisee bulaan Oromoo bishaan dhabee horii isaa walin dhumaa jiru lammii sablammoota biraa hidhachiisanii itti bobbaasuun fixuun maaliif?. Akasiin Oromoo baleessan Oromiyaa dhufachuu yaalaa jiru.

Seera barnootaa fi kitaaba barnootaa jijjiiruun barataan Oromoo seenaa naannoo isaa barachuu dhorkamee ol aantummaa Tigraayi fi waa'ee seenaa Aksuumii fi tokkummaa empayera Itiyoophiyaa ijaaruu akka barataniif godhama jira. Kitaaba dabbalootna TPLF oogummanin barreessamanii fi Mana maxansaa wayyaanee Meegaatti maxansiifameetu qarshii milyoonaan lakkaawamu itti gurguratanii ol antummaa Tigraay faarsuun ijoollee keenya ittiin sammuu doomsaa jiru. Oromummaa baleessan Itiyoophiyumma ijaraa jiru.

Lakkobsa Ummataa Oromoo dhoksudhan lakkobsaa dura turee irra ilee gadii hanqisan ka'uudha baajetaa haqa fi bu'uura misoomaa akka hin arganee goodhani jiru ;

Finfinneen irraa Oromiyyan Galii argachuu qabu seeran murta'ee waggoota 18 akka hin arganee TPLF dhorkamee jira OPDON Oromoof qabsa'uuf dandeeti hin qabdu ;

Afaan Oromoo Afaan Biyyoleessa akka ta'uu falmaa WFDOOn gegesa jiru TPLF harkati cufee jira. WFDO filaannoo bara 2010 ti lammi isaa bakka bu'ee wayyanee kan gafatuuf deemu Afaan Oromoo Afaan Biyyoleessa ni ta'aa moo hin ta'uudha? Deebiin TPLF fi OPDON deebisan jireenya isaan murtessuf deema yoo dhuggan jirteef?

Sagantaa TV afaan Oromoo qabsoo meeqaan argame hanguma ta'eefuu TV federaalaa irraa biyya alaatti tamsafamu STVO jedhanii guutummaatti sagantaa dhaaba maxxanee wayyaanee OPDO qofa dabarsutti jijjiiruun sana iyyuu biyya keessatti daanggeessan. Miseenstni Paarlaamaa illee uummta keenyaaf akka hin falmneef dhiibamnee biyyaa akka baanu taasifamne. Yeroo ammaa kana ammoo TPLF sagantaa hunda jijjiiree Sabaa fi Sab-lammii biyya sana keessaa balleesse Impaayeraa jaaruuf figaa jira. Labsii dhihoo kana baase keessatti Kitaaba Herregaa ala warri kaan akka jijjiiraman gochaa jiru, kana keessaa barreefami kan dura waa'ee mirga sabaa fi sablammii ibsan, seenaa uummataa fi aadaa fi afaan uummataa calaqqisan hunda jijjiiruuf murteefatanii jiru. Yeroo ammaa kana Oromootni ala jirru seenaa Oromoo, qabeenya, fayyaa fi barnoota kan ilaaluun fuula hundaan barreessinee biyya akka galu taasisuu bannan dhalooti dhufu seenaa Tigraay qofa barachuuf dirqisiifamaa akka jiru hubachuu qabna.

### **C. Oromoon Qabeenya isaa guutumaatti TPLFn dhunfatamuu fi saamamuu ilaalchisee;**

Oromoon maqaaa investmentiin lafa isaa saamame, uummati lafa isaa irra buqqaa'ee beenyaa madalawaa hin taaneen ari'amuu isaa caalaa abba qabeenyaa lafa isaa fudhatu biratti illee dursi keennameefii akka qacaramu hin taasifamne. Investeroonni lafa fudhatan, ashuura mootummaa naannoof galuu malu miliyoona hedduu hin kafalle, uummati keenya carraa mana barumsaa, buufata fayyaa kkf ykn investera irraa ykn mootummaa naannoo irraa argachuu qaban hin arganne. Waan jedhaa jiru kanaaf Kaaba Oromiyaa hanga Kibbaatti, Baha Oromiyaa hanga Dhihaatti fakeenya hedduu fi kubaaniyaa hedduu maqaa isaanii isnii dhiheessuu ni danda'ama.

Maqaa abbaa qabeenyaa (investerii) jajjabeessuu jedhuun ilmaan Tigraayi I Oromiyaa lafa qonnaa fi albudaa erga qoodatanii booda isa hafe froottan isaanii ykn hiryoota isaanii biyya alaa keessattuu biyyoota Arabbaatti gurgurachaa jiru. Namoota lammii biyyaa ta'an muraasa biyya alaa irraa kottaa lafa fudhaa jechuun lafuma Oromoo Oromootti gurgurachaa jiru. Tooftaa kanaanis siyaasaa isaanii akka deggeran hawwachaa jiru. Akka kanaan nammooti horii fi garaa isaanii jaallatan (money lovers) tokko tokko biyyatti galanii Wayyanneetti harka kennachaa jiru. Inveestimentii Ityoophiyaa dugda duuba dirqama hedduutu jira. Keessaahuu abbootii qabeenyaa Oromoo dirqama dachaatu irra jira. Maallaqa Ityoophiya keessa galchee irratti abba ta'uu yoo barbade waan wayyanneen jettu fi dirqama isheen laattu hunda raawwachuu qaba. Kanaafuu Inveestieriin ykn abbaan qabeenyaa Oromoo biyya keessa jirus ta'e ala irraa Ityoophiyaatti galu hundi OPDO ta'uuf dirqama. Yeroo ammaa immoo qondaalota Mootummoota biyya adda addaa dabalatee maallaqa seeraa ala horatan lafti kennameefii Ityoophiyaa keessaatti investi gochaa jiru, warra kana keessaa Pirezidantii Djibutii, Pirezidaantii Sudaan, Keniyaa, Saudi Arabiya, biyyoota arabaa fi kan biroo hedduutu lafti Oromoiyaa akka badhaasaatti kennameefii jira. Wayyaanoti lafa Oromootiin fira bitachaa jiru. Qabeenyan Oromoo TPLF hirachaa jiru fi maqa Investmentiin gurguraachaa jiru kun seera kamin iyyu haqa qabeesa waan hin tanef bor uummataa Oromoof waan deebi'uuf namoon fi dhaabbileen daldaalaa maqa inveestimentin qabeenya Oromoo samaama jiru kana keessati akka hin hirmane Gummin Paarlaamaa Oromoo balinan akeekachisa cima dabarse jira.

Yakki eenyummaa Oromoo balleessuuuf dalagamaa jiru saamichaa fi lafa isaa irraa buqqisuu kan caale ammoo xuriin waarshaa qilleensaa fi bishaan summeesu, xaa'oo qonnaa biyyoo summeesuu fi kan qonnaa abaaboo ykn daraaraa keessaa lafa Oromiyaa mancaasaa jiru lubbuu lammiiwwan keenyaa hedduu galafachuu irra dabree, hegere Oromoo fi biyya Oromoo balleessuu ta'e jedhamee hojjetamaa jira. Kun ammuma dhaabbachuu baayyee yaaddeessaa dha. Kan dhaabsisuun qaama qabsoo bilisummaa deemsisaa jirruu ti. Fakkeenyaaf lixa Wallgaa gutuumaa keessatti biyyoon xaa'oon summaa'ee uummati qonnaan bulu rakkoo guddaa keessa jira. Uummata lafti qonnaa isaa manca'e lubbuu isaa baraaruu qonnaa naannoo bifa isaa jijjiiruun homisha midhaanii irraa gara bunaa, Urgooftuu horsiisa kannisaa fi kkf-tti jijjiiruun dirqama. Eeenyu kana haa godhu? Yeroo biffaa qonnaa jijjiramuu kana keessa uummati akka hin beelofneef sagantaa gargarsaa (Safty Net) jedhamuu jalatti gurmeessuun jireenyi uummatichaa karaa mootummaa akka wabii argatu Paarlaamaan gaafatamaa turu gurri dhaga'u hin argane. Waan jennu kana hundaaf furmaati Walumaa gala mootummaa kana achi kaafnee uummati Oromoo aangoo politikaa harka isaa galfatee ofiin of bulchu malee saamicha, cunqursaa, gidiraa fi dhiphiin uummata keenya irraa hin dhaabbatu.

Sagantaa qabeenya uumamaa fi uummata Oromoo Oromiyaa keessaa balleessuu kana keessatti Bosonni Oromiyaa guutamaatti fkn. bosonni Baallee, Arsii, Gujii, Harargee, Iluu Abbabooraa, Wallagaa fi bakkoota biroo akka badu taasifamaa jira. Bineensotaa fi qabeenyi uumamaa biroos kana keessa dhabamaa jiru. Gocha lammiiwwan Oromoo fi qabeenya uumama Oromiyaa mancaasuu kana saaxiiluun dhaabbilee miti- mootummaa qabeenya kana baraaruu hojjetan waliin sochii cimaan hatattamaan godhamuu qaba. Wayyanneen Hoji fi Ta'itaan biyyati ifaati Tigroota qoofan akka Oganamuu godhamee jira. Haaluma kana sochii biyyati Malas jaalati Minsterootan hojjetama ture bakka 5ti qoodani hundu Malas jala erga galanni booda malas jalati namoota lammi Tigiray tananti guyya guyyan akka gabbasan godhaman jiri. Yaaka Fixiinsaa Sanyi wayyanen Geesisuf deemtuuf of qopheesu. Sababi isaa Humni waraana biyyati ilmaan Tigiree qoofa ta'ee jira. Ajaajooti Waraana Ol'anannon biyyat hundi Tigree ta'ee jira, kanaafuu

furmata hatatamaaf qoophee addaa goochuu qabna. Gocha kana of irra facisuuf Oromoo qoopha'aa hin jiru. Kanaaf ataman jeequmsa dhaabbilee Oromoo giduu jiru kana dhaabnee, qabsoo gara diinati deebisu qabna.

## 2. Dhaabbillee siyaasaa Oromoo giddutti rakkoo mulatu

Dhaabbileen siyaasaa Oromoo walaba ta'an baay'achuu fi ijaramuun uummata Oromoof sodaa miti, caaraa dha malee, biyya keessaa fi biyya alaa dhaabbilee Oromoo jirachuun karaa hundaa bu'aa qaba, Garuu dhaabbilee heedumeesuun qoofa isaati bu'aa hin qabu. Dhaabbilee bayyachuun matan isaa malattoo wal shakuuti. Hawaasi biyya hin ijaarratin jiruu fi qabsootti jiruu fi diina tokkoo waliin qabu jaarmayaa siyaasaa baayyifate ilaalchaan yoo qoodame rakkoo qaba. Ammoo dhaabbileen Oromoo jiran baayyeen isaanii gandaa fi gosa irratti ijaaraman yoo ta'eef adeemsi akkanaa tokkummaa sabichaaf balaa qabaata. Hawaasi ilaalchaan qoqqoodame tokkummaan bilisummaa isaaf lolachuu irratti dhibdee qabaata. Inni biyya keessa jiruu rakkoo uummata keenya irra ga'uu iyyaachuun, eenyu uummata keenya irratti yaaka hojjetaa akka jiruu galmeesuun, saamiicha qabeenya Oromoo irratti geggeefamaa jiru eenyu akka hojjetuu fi kkf yaakoota uummata keenya irratti raawwatamaa jiran addunyaaaf kan gabaasan jiraachuun, galme seenaa booriif ni gargara.

Waldaan Maccaa - Tullama fi Waqeefanaan dhorkamee qabeenyi isaa saamamee maqaa Oromoon qaami socho'u tokko illee dhabamee jeennaan maal goonu jechuun waggaa lama guutuu Jaarsoolii Oromoo fi Hayyuu Oromoo walitti waamuun marii'achisuu egalle. Lammii Oromoo ABO jedhamanii mana hiidhaa jiraniif biyya keessatti nami iyyatuuf, barattoota Oromoo eenyumaa Oromoof yunivarsiitii hundaa keessatti fincilaa jiraniif, kan akka dhaabbatti Oromoof iyyatuuf hin turre. Obbo Bulchaa Dammaqaa dabalatee jaarsoolii duraan siyaassa keessa hin seenu jeedhanii turan rakkoo kana erga hubatanii booda dulluma keessa humna isaanii fi qabeenya isaanii hundaa utuu wal irra hin kutin falmii mirgaa irratti gummaachaa jiru. WFDOon Qabsoo egalee ja'aa lama keessati yaaka Mootuummaa TPLF ummataa fi hawassa adunyati biiratti saxiludhan wayyaneeeti yaadoo ta'ee, Paarlamaa keessati mirga saba keenyaf falmachuu fi mootumma morormuunkana ummani keenya mootummaa diiduu fi irratti finciluu akka danda'uu barsifne jira. Guyya gaafa ijaramee kasse waregama lubu bayee bassa jira. WFDOon akka dhaabbile biirroo Degersa Di'aspora biyya ala irra dhabun isaa humna fi degerssa ummataa gutuu qabu akka itti hin fayadamne goodhe jira.

Dhaabbillee ala jiran immoo fuulaa tokkoon qabeenya xiqqoo jirtu itti gargaaramee humna jiru qabsoo irra akka oolfatutu barbaadama. Qabsoo bilisummaaf godhamuu keessatti dhaabbillee adda addaa jirachuun bu'aa isaa irra balaa isaatu heddumata. Qabsoo bilisummaa biyyootni gaggeessan Palastiin, Afganstan, Zmbabuwe, Angola, Somalee kkf akka ragaati dhiheesuun ni danda'ama. Tokkumaa Oromoo fi bilisummaan Oromoo kan hin hafnee ta'uu isaa qabsa'oon uni tokko jeedhan qabsoo irratti wareegaman seena tokkumaa Oromoo Diggan iaanin barreesan darban dhaaloon hara'aa harkan haquu yaala jiran. Ani waanan dubachuu fedhu waan gochuu qabnu irratti. Biyya tokko keessaatti dhaabbilleen siyaasaa yaada addaa addaa qabaatan jiraachuun diimokraasii dagaagsuuf, dorgommi babal'isuu fi hojii saffisiisuuf barbaachisaa dha. Qabsoo bilisummaa keessatti garuu humna namaa fi qabeenya muraasa jirtu tamsaasuu irra iyyuu gufuu walitti ta'uu fi iccitii baasuun diinaaf wal saaxiluu kkf balaa hedduu qaba.

Biyya Itiyoopiyaa keessatti filannoo bara 2005 irratti WFDO, KUO, OPDO fi Oromoon dhunfaan dorgoman akka dhaabbilee Oromooti sagalee Oromoo gargar qoodanii bakka mursati kan injifataan horma turan. Fakkenyaaf Bushooftuu keessatti WFDO, KUO, OPDO fi Oromota dhuunfaa 9 ta'an fi Qiniijitit. Waligalatti namooti 13 dhihaatanii Oromoo harki 90 guddaan ol Oromoo filatee garuu sagaleen bakka 12 qoqqoodamaa waan tureef Oromooti dorgoman injifachuu hin dandeenye. Dhaabotiin Oromoo kana irraa barumsa argatanii hanga bilisummaa Oromoo dhugoomutti humna isaanii tokko taasisuun dirqama. Warri dhuguma bilisummaa Oromoo barbaadan tarree tokko irra dhaabbachuun barbaachisaa dha. Uummatai kenyas kana barbaada. Dhaabbilee Oromoo lama biyya keessaa haal duree tokko malee akka isaan wal ta'an kan dirqisise uummata. Kanaafuu dhabbiileen Mirga hiree of ofiin murteefachuu, feedhii Oromoo hunda fi dantaa uummatichaa irratti wal ta'uu qaban.

Dhaabbileen Oromoo Dadhaabina qaban siirfachu qabu insi, Humna ta'uu dadhabuu, Miseensa namusa fi hubanoo qabu horachuu fi to'aachuu dhabu, of gamagamu dhaabbu, seera dhablumaa fi namusaa dhabuun babalachuu, ecitiin egamu dhaabuun, hawwasaa ofi duka hirirsu dadhabuu, media isaan to'aachu dhabuu, hawwasaa akka qoodamu kara banu, rakko dhunfaa dhaabban wali qabsisu- rakko dhaabba hawwasan waliti hidhu, kana darbee rakkon kun hanga ini biyya galuti caalisan ilaaluu. Uummataa abbaa qabsoo ijoollee gootaa dhaalchee qabsooti irra wareegee wal dura dhaabuun dhaabba ni baleessa malee hin cimmissuu. Goochaan kun atataman siirachuu qaba. Dhaabbillee yaada ummataa kana hin fudhane, tokkummaa saba keenya tiksun qabsoo bilisummaa irrati kan hin xiyyefanee lammi Oromoo hundan balalefatamu qabu.

### **3. Rakko Diaspora (Hawwassa biyya ala) Keessaa jiru.**

Hawaasaa ykn Diasporan biyya nagaa fi biyya demokraataawwa keessa jiratu Uummataa keessa ba'ee kan nagaa fi mirga dhaabee garbuma jalati jiratu sana harka qabee rakkoo keessa basun dirqama lammummaati jeena. Garuu haali mullacha jiru kara hunda faalaa ta'ee jira. Waan hunda caalaa dursa kan argachuu qabu rakkoo Uummataa Oromoo fi Ormiyya walgalati. Miseensoon dhaabba kami iyuu waan hunda duraa rakkoo Uummataa isaanf dursa keenu qabu. Itti ansee dhimmaa dhaabba isaa isaan itti dabaluu dhimmaa Oogana ykn Miseensoota isaani irratti hojeechuu qabu. Sababi isaa Ogaani ni jijirama, dhaabbilee sadarka tokko irratti baduu ni mala, kan hin jijiramnee fi kan itti fufu lammii Oromooti inni iyuu tanan yoo xiyyeefannoo keenuuf bane balaa guddan mudaachuu mala. Kanaaf Diasporan ala jiru waan hunda caalaa Uummata irra dhaalatee biyya jiruu fi tokkummaa Oromoof dursa keenu dhaabbilee Oromoo ilee tokkummaa isaan cimmsani bilisummaa Uummataa isaanf akka qabsa'aaan dhibba gochuu qaba. Diasporan Oromoo rakkoo Uummataa isaa utuu beeku rakkoo xixiqoo dhaabbilee keessa jirtu afarsuun lammi isaa biyya keessa diinan du'aa jiru irratti falimachuu irra of qusachuun seena birratti akka nu gaafachisu beeku qaba. Lammin Birroo hagami akka isaan dhaabbilee isaan biyya keessa fi biyya ala irrati qabsa'aa jiranf tumsa, deggersa fi kabaja isaan wali qaban ijaan arga jira. Oromoo ilee of jalaa hirirsuf waan hunda goocha jira. Hawaassi ala jiru dhaabbile hidhanon lola jiran akka deeggersi guddan barbaachisu beekke, dhaabbile biyya keessa kan kara nagaa qabsa'an ilee deggersa isaan barbaachisu hunda goochuun dirqama. Biyya keessatis ta'ee boosoonatti qabsoon godhamuu deeggersa diaspora barbaachisa. Lammin Oromoo ala jiruu 200,000 socho'ee qabsoo bilisummaa yoo waan hunda deggere bilisummaan keenya hin faagatu. Deeggersa tokko ilee utuu hin godhin yoo namoota mursa irra bilisummaa egna tatee bilisummaan hawwii qoofa ta'uu malti. Diina irrati akka hiirira hin bane qaami nu dhorkuu yoo jiratee ergama diina qoofa. Qabsa'oota Oromoo kalleessa laga fi amantan utuu wal hin qoodiin

wal birra dhabbatan, wal dukka beela'aan, waliin diina dura dhaabatani Oromuummaa isaaniif wareegaman kayyoo isaan bakkan ga'uun nu irra egama.

#### 4. Fedhi, gaaffi fi dhammsi uummata Oromoo keessaa

Ummatni Oromoo erga garbofamee kaasee qabsoo irraa of qusatee hin beeku. Addunyaa kana irratti lammiin akka Oromoo bilisummaa isaaf hanga danda'ee qabsa'aa jira. Carraa isaa ta'ee baroota qabsoo bilisummaa geggeese hundaa keessa diinni isaa gargaarsa meeshaa fi tumsa biyya alaa yammuu argatan Oromoon argachuuf hin milkooftne malee loluu dhadhabe ykn sodaatee miti. Ummati Oromoo uumma goota. ABO illee rakkootu quunnamaa jira, yoo haqaan ilaaltee rakkoo uummata Oromoo waggoota dheeraaf mudatant isas mudachaa jira malee loltoon Oromoo ykn qabsa'ootni Oromoo qabsoo laaffisanii miti. Lola ABOon geggeese keessatti warri lubbuun jiran dubbachuu danda'u, Oromoon sodaa tokko malee wareegama hedduu akka kafale shakkii tokko malee dubbachuu dandeenya. Qabsoon kun waggoota dheeraaf itti fufee kan jiru illee qabsoo haqaa fi wareegama qaqqaalii waan baaseef, fedhii fi gaaffiin uummata Oromoo waan hin deebi'in jiruuf.

Fedhi fi gaaffin uummata Oromoo gabaabaa fi ifaa dha, Bilisummaa fi Abba Biyyumaa isaa mirkaneesuu qofa. Ofiin of bulchuu barbaada. Sababi isaa immo mootumoota Itiyooophiyaa dhufaa darba itti wal jijjiiran waan garboofatanf. Mirga isaa irra ejjetan, Qabeenya isaa saaman. Abbaa biyyaa fi abbaa qabeenyaa keenya kan taanu, mirgi keenya eegamuu kan danda'u, afaanii fi aadaan keenya kan kabajamu yoo bilisoomnee ofiin of bulchuu dandeenye qofa dha. Kana mirkaneefachuuf immoo qabsoo ABO waggaa dheeraaf geggeessaa jira. Kaayyoon Adda bilisummaa Oromoo utuu gaaffii taayitaa ta'ee gaafa mootuummaan Dargii kufee mootumaa keessaa qooda fudhate taayitaa qooddatee sirna jiru keessatti hojjeta ture. Ykn immoo deggersa uummataa dhabe akkuma dhaabbilee biroo dhabama ture. Ummati kun dhaaba kana irraa utuu abdiin hin kutatin kan duukaa cichee jiruuf kaayyoo haqaa waan inni hordofuu fi gaaffiin uummata Oromoo deebii argachuu dhabuu irraa ti. Dhaabbilee Oromoo Bilisummaa Oromoo hin deggere kam iyyuu umurii isaani gabaabaa fi deggersa Uummataa kan hin qabne ta'uu isaani qabatamaan mirkanaa'ee jira.

Ummatni Oromoo abba biyyaa akka ta'uuf Dhaabbilee Oromoo fi qabsa'oota Oromoo gumaachuun murteessaadha. Sababi isaa waan jaallannuuf ykn jibbinuuf utuu hin taane Oromoon ijjoolllee isaa kan itti dhabe fi Qabsoo kana jiraachisuuf waan hundaan waan itti dhadhabeef. Qabsoo kana asiin ga'uuf fi addunyaatti beeksisuuf wareegama qaqqaalii hedduutu itti bahe. Kanaaf Qabsoon lubun heedun itti waregamee kana bakka ga'uun dirqama. Keesumati Madda qabsa'oota Oromoo hunda kan ta'ee ABO dhabota siyaasaa biroo irraa adda kan godhu namtokkeen ykn namooti muraasi qofti dhunfatani akka barbaadanitti oofuu kan hin danda'amne ta'uu isaa ti. Eenyuumaa keenyaa iyyuu kan nu barsise ABO ta'uu haaluu hin dandeenyu. ABO fi dhaabbilee Oromoo walaba mirgaa fi haqa saba isaaniif dhaabbatan wajjin marii gochuun, tokkummaan hojjatanii tokkummaa sabaa keenyaa eeguun gaafatama seenaa fi dirqama hamileetu irra jira. Tokkummaan hojjechuuf akka wali galus abdiin guddaa qabna. Kanatu mootummaa Oromiyyaa ijaaruu nu dandeesisa. Qabsoon Oromoo Kaayyoo bala'aa fi Uummataa bala'aa irratti kan ijaarame waan ta'eef Oromoo hundi abdi utuu hin kutatin waggoota 40 qabsoo itti fufe jira. Biyya Oromoo fi Mootuummaa Oromiyya ijaru ala furmata birra hin jiree isiinti dhamatu.



Dhaamsi ummataa kana Diasporan, Hayyuun, walistoon, abbotii qabeenya Oromoo hundaan nu qaqaba nu diirmadha jecha jiru.

Dhaabbilee Oromoo ergaa Wayyaanee of duubaa hin qabne tokkummaan qabsoo geggessuu qabu, garuu farreen tokkummaa, loote seentota(infiltraters) wayyanee irraa of eeggachuu barbaachisa. Oromoon yeroo ammaa kana waan inni qabuu fi itti obsu tokkummaa isaa waan ta'eef dhaabbilee Oromoo tokkummaa uummatichaa eguun hunda irra murteesaa ta'uu isiin dhamatu. Diinni Oromoo qoodee biituuf karooraan waan hojjetuuf akka utuu hin beekin diinaaf karaa hin banne of eeggannoo guddaa gochuun barbaachisaa dha. Fedhiin uummataa bilisummaa ta'uu isaa erga amannee bilisummaa dura wal qooduun bilisummaa barbaadamu hanqisuu akka danda'u hubachuun nama hin dhibu. Kanaa ala diina dhiisanii wal dura dhaabbachuun ajeechaa, reebicha fi samiicha fi wareegama guumaa hin qabne baasuun Oromootti yeroo dararaa dheeresuu ta'uu isaa dhamatuu.

Humnaa fi qabeenya Oromoo diinni itti faayyadamaa jiru dantaa Oromoo fi bilisummaa keenyaaf itti fayyadamuu qabna. Amantaan mana Waqqaatti lubbuu keenyaa fayyisuuf lafa irratti illee lubbuu keenya salphattee rakkachaa jirtuuf nu qaqabuu qaba. Oromoon Musiliama, Kiristaana, Waqeeffataa hundi Oromummaa isaatti qixxee ajeeffamaa jira. Kanaafuu amantaa fi lagan utuu wal hin qoodin wal bira dhaabbatee tokkumman bilisummaa uummata isaaf lolachuu qaba. Uummani bilisummaa hin qabne amantin isaa akka hin kabajamne kan waaqeeffatan yammuu bakka itti waaqeeffatan humnan irraa ari'amanii fi dhorkaman agarree mirkaneeffannee jirra. Walumagalati Oromoo biyya keessa kan barbadduu Tokkumma Oromoo, Bilisummaa Oromoo, Tokkummaa dhaabbilee siyyassa Oromoo hirmana lammi Oromoo hundan Abba Biyumma isaa deefachudha.

## 5. Maal gochuu akka qabnu fi yaada furmaataa

Bilisummaa ni barbana? Tokkummaa Oromoo cimmisu ni barbana? Erga kana ta'ee dhaabbileen Oromoo tokkummaa Uummaani Mootummaa Oromiyya ijaaruf rakkoon guddan hin jiru. Rakkoo kanaa olitti dubbane seenaaf ol kaa'uuf utuu hin taanee maal goonu jennee furmaata akka itti barbanuuf. Waan as dhufneefis fedhii uummata keenyaa ija itti gochuuf yaada wal jijiruu erga ta'ee hunda keenya wal irrati utuu hin tanee diina irrati qabsa'uuf hamurteefanuu. Rakkoo odeessuu qofa utuu hin taane gara hojitti haa deemnu jennee wali gallaa taanaan fulaa hundaa humna Uummachuu, dirree lolaan, dirree siyaasaan, ijaarsaa fi hawaasaa hiriirsuun, quunnamtin, diplomaasii fi jaarmiyota mirga dhala namaaf falman ijaaruun, madda dinagdee uummachuu fi karaa hawaasummaan, kara hunda socho'uu qabna. Walumaagalatti tokkummaa dhaabbilee Oromoo fi fedhi Uummataa Oromoo hunda kan ta'ee Mootummaa Oromiyaa hundeesuf jaarmiyaa fi dirree nu hojjechisuu danda'uu ijaaruun amma. Kun waan yeroon itti kennamu miti. Har'aa ykn bori ganama Oromiyyan yoo bilisoomtee Tarsiimo fi saganta kami irratti hojjena?. Kun dirqamaa Hayyuu Oromooti malee, Qabsa'aa dirree irraa jiru ykn Uummata siirna garbuma jala ture kana irra egun siir miti. Hundi keessan akka na hubaachaa jirtan abdiin qaba. Waan hin olle har'a itti yaaduun barbaachisaadha, hawaas Aaddunyaas taanan adeemsa keenyaaf qophi keenya ilaalee nu bira dhaabbata. Yoo nuti waan bu'aa fi hiika qabu hojjetaa hin jiru ta'e, ofii keenyaan dhimma keenya geggeeffachuu fi ofiin of bulchuuf dandeettii hin qabnu ta'e garuu waan nu bira dhaabbatuuf jiran natti hin fakkaatu. Buddeen nama quubsu Eelee irraatti beeku jedha mitii ree Oromoon. Biyya Oromoo fi mootummaa Oromiyaa ijaarra eenaa jennu mootummaa akkamii ijaaruuf demna. Sirna mootummaa akkamiitu seenaa, aadaa fi egeree

Oromoof tolaa dha jennee bilchinaan yoo irraatti hin mari'atin, akkuma mootummoota Itiyoophiyaa heerota mootummoota biroo akka jirutti garagalchinee ittiin deemna yoo jenne dhibdee akka qabaatu asuma irraa beekuun gaarii dha. Mootummaan Oromiyaa ijaaramuu qaba jennee dubbannu mootummaa walaba ta'ee fi sirna dimokrasii irratti hundaa'e akka ta'u wal nu hin falamisiisu. Haa ta'u malee sirna dimokraasii amayya fi sirna ittiin bulmaataa Oromoo (sirna Gadaa) akkamiin wl simsiisuu dandeenya isaa jedhu irratti hayuun Oromoo balinan irratti hojjechuu qabu.

Uummati Oromoo bilisummaa barbaada kanaaf wayyaanee dura dhaabbatee wareegama kafalaa jira erga jennee fedhiin Oromoo bilisummaa ta'uu irratti walii gallee xumuraachuu qabna. Kana hunda gochuuf qabsoo wal irra hin cinee goone bilisumma keenya dhugomsudha. Kana booda akkuman bara 2006 TV Eritrea irratti dubadhe Oromiyyan akka biyyati Oolaa ishee kan barbadee waliin Federeshin ykn Konfederation Uummatootaa Gaanfa Afrika waliin hundeefachu ni dandesi jeedheen ture. Onga'oon Wayyaanee fi Eritrea immo kanuma xiinoo jaalisan isaan jalati federeshnin akka buulu nu barsiisu yalaa jiru. Namoon Oromoo fi Oromiyya maliif akka barbaadan waan beeknuuf, nama nu waliin jirachuu feedhu dura mirga keenya kabaju qabida ittin jenna.

Kanuma waliin mootummaan Oromiyaa ijaaramuu qaba ennaa jennu yaadi Mootummaan Oromiyaa ijaaramee jira jedhu (OPDOn) Uummtaa sobu yaalaa jira. Kanaaf mootummaan maqaa Oromoon Oromiyaan bulchaa jira jedhu mootummaa kittallayyoo wayyaanee ta'uu isaa iffati ibsuun barbaachisaa dha. Mootummaan suni ofiifuu mootummaa bilisa akka hin ta'in kan koloneeffataan achi kaawwate collaborator/kittillayyoo/ ta'uu isaa ragaan saba Oromoo caalee hin jiru. Mootummaa Oromiyya ijaarun nu hin barbaachisuu wari jeedhan yoo jiratan immo waara qabsoo hin egal in ykn waara qabsoo gurguratee qoofaa. Malee Uummani Oromoo Bilisummaa fi Mootummaa Oromiyya feedha.

Qabsoo kana furgaasuuf furmaati biraa dhaabbilee Oromoo tokko ta'uu qabu. Dhaabbileen Oromoo biyya keessaa wal ta'uun Uummata biyya keessaa gammachisee jira, kan biyya alaas wal ta'uu wan isaan dhorku hin jiru. Dhaabbilee siyaasaa kaayyoo adda addaa qaban silas tokko ta'uun hin salphatu. Kanneen kaayyoon isaanii wal fakkaatuu fi walitti dhihoo sababa isaan adda addaa deemaniif hin jiru. Fedhii murna fi ilaalcha siyaasaa xixiqqaan addaan qoodamuun kaayyoo bilisummaa isaa guddichaaf bakka kennuu dhabuu irraa adda miti.

Lubbuun Oromoo rasaasa wayyaanneen, wal dhabbi Uummtooa naannoon, xurii warshaa fi abaaboon dhumaa jiru, barattoota barumsa irraa ittifamaa jiran, ajeefamuu, ari'amuu, Oromummaa isaatiin yakkani hojii dhorkachuu fi hojii irra ari'uu kun dhaabbachuu qaba. Rakkoon nutti heddumatu illee fedhii bilisummaa Uummatni keenya qabu guutuuf falmachuun dirqama. Biyyi keenya tokkoo, hireen keenya tokkoo, diinni keenya tokkoo waan ta'eef waan walii galuu nu dhorku hin jiru. Teenyee qabsaa'oota komachuu dhiifnee, lammii irratti wal irratti duuluu dhiifnee diina irratti duuluu Eegaluu qabna. Wal irratti barreessuu dhiifnee diina irratti barreessuu, lammii irrattii loluu dhiifnee diina irrattii loluu, wal irratti guufuu ta'uu dhiifnee diinatti guufuu haa taanu. Wal iyyaachuu dhiifnee waliif dirmaachuu murteefachuu qabna.

Kana gochuuf immoo furmaati maali ? Oromoo karaa hundaa fi dandeettii isaa hundaan wal gurmeessee waan tokko hojjechuu qaba. Bilisummaa fi biyya Oromoo ni barbaanna erga ta'ee humna tanee bilisummaaf lolu qabna. Warri waraanaa of duuba yaadu dhiisee gara fulaa duraatti

akka bobba'uuf fi of duuba millaachuu, yaada'uu dhiisee murannoon fi abdiin lolaaf bobba'uu qaba. OSA'n Giddugaleessa beektoota fi Hayuulle Oromoo hundati Jarmiyyan kun Oromoon rakko inni keessa jiru kana keessa basuuf humna isaa hundan tokkummaa fi bilisummaa isaa akka mirkana'uu hojeechuu qaba. OSG, ORA kkf irraas Oromoon abdiin guddaa qaba, dhaabbileen mirga dhala namaaf falman biyya alaa fi biyya keessatti Oromoof falmachuu qabu.

Eegaa maaliif akka qabsoofnuu fi bilisomnee maal akka hojennu dursinee beekuu fi bu'uura kawachuun barbaachisaa qofa utuu hin taane dirqama. Addunyaan rakkoo Uummataa keenyaa kana hubannoo ga'aa hin qabu. Seenaa keenya sirna Habaasha jalatti awwalamee waan tureef seenaa keenya dukkana keessaa ifatti baasuun yakka nu irratti dalagame kana saaxiluu fi of ijaaru qabna. Innis yeroon isaa amma. Humna taanee yoo ol baane malee bakka amma jirru kanatti ormi dhimma keenya hordofuuf waan rakkatu miti. Waraanaan, Siyaasaa, qabeenya hundaa horachuun, humna namaa fi qabeenya Oromiyaa hundaa fayyadamuun bilisummaa barbaannu argachuu qabna. Fedhii fi hawwii qofa utuu hin taane yammuu hojiin argsiifnu addunyaan ofuma isaatii nu gaafachuu egala. Kun ta'uu baannaan utuu miidhamuu keenya arganii cal'isu. Kanaaf furmati isaa kan nu ajeesaa nu samaa jiru of irra kaafnee angoo politikaa harka keenya galfachuu dha.

Walga'iin Oromoo bakka itti wal morminee addan baanu utuu hin tane bakka itti rakkoo Uummata keenyaa hubannee wal hubachiifnee, yaada furmaataa qabatamaa irratti mari'annee murtee dabarsiinee kaanu ta'uu qaba. Dhaabbilee, koreelee fi jaarmiyoti Miti-Mootumma Oromoo adda addaa yaada murtee kana akka hojii qabatamaatti hiikan karaa itti argisutuu nu irraa eegama.

Dhaabotiin Oromoo gara garaa hojii qabatamaatti akka seenan fi warri miidiyaan wal irratti ololan akka dhaaban nuti illee olola dhaabbilee Oromoo diiguuf adeemsifamu dura dhabbachuuf qophii ta'uu keenya waadaa waliif haa galu. Yeroo Wayyaanneen Oromuumaa cabsaa jirtu kana keessatti ilmaan Oromoo immoo tokkummaa Oromoo tiksuu dhaabbilee Oromoo wal dura dhabbatan walitti fiduudhaan seeraa fi heera Oromiyaa qopheesuudhaan fedhii Uummataa Oromoo irratti kan hundaa'e mootummaa Oromiyaa gadi dhabbuuf bu'uura kaa'uun dirqama.

Oromoon nama taa'ee namaa qequu fi komatuu utuu hin tanee ilmaa qabsa'ee waregma basee bilisomsuu barbada. Jarsaa hanga ijoleetti, Proffesara hanga walalatti Oromoon bilisumaaf haabobanu, Ogani Qabsoo cimman diree qabsoo irra argama malee Magaala Adunya keessa miti. Kanafuu diree qabsootti haasosonu, Oromiyaa haa ijaruu. Kanaaf imoo tokkummaa fi wal amantaa cimmaa marii fi wal galtee irratti hunda'een har'aa Hayuuleen samuu Oromooti jedhamnuu miseensoon OSA waan Oromoo dandamachisuu danda'uu tokko murteefane deemuu qabna.

Dhaabbileen siyyassa Oromoo, Hayuuleen Oromoo fi bakka bu'oon haawwasa Oromoo Rakko biyya Oromiyaa jiru fi haala Oromoo keessa jiru xiyyefannoo keessa galchuun haala dure tokko malee murtee atataman murteefachuu qaba,

1. Dhaabbilee siyyassa Oromoo, hayuuleen Oromoo fi bakka bu'oon Oromoo argaman Tokkummaa tiksuu fi Bilisummaa Oromoo bakkan ga'uuf, Oromiyaa Bilisoomtee ijaaruuf wal galuu qabna.

2. Dhaabbilee Siyyaasaa Oromoo fi maqaa Oromoon kan ijaaramee qami kami iyuu Olola biffa kami iyuu wal irrati akka hin deemsifne wal galuun, media qabsoo Oromoo, Dhaabbilee Oromoo fi qabsa'oota Oromoo irrati olola adeemsisu waliin akka hin dhaabane fi wal tanee dura dhabachuuf wal galuu qabna.
3. Dhaabbilee Oromoo Tokkummaa Uummata keenya tiksun Oromiyya Bilisoomtee ijaaru wal galee dhaabbilee hunda mariiachifnee atataman wal galtee Ol'anaa goochuu fedha keenya fi qoophi ta'uu wali galuu qabna.
4. Mootummaa Oromiyyaa Ijaaruuf feedhi Uummataa Oromoo ta'uu hubanee dhaabbile Oromoo feedhi fi hawwii saba keenya bakkan ga'uuf diina irrati akka hojeetan jajabeesu qabna.
5. Dhaabbi maqaa Oromoon deemu kami iyuu qabsoo dhaabbile Oromooti guufu ta'uu fi olola kami iyuu irrati demsisu badi ta'uu hubatee, qabsoo fi olola diina Oromoo qoofa irrati akka adeemsisu hubachisuu danda'uu qabna.
6. Dhaabbile biyya keessa kara nagaa mootumma Ityoophiyaa waliin waan hojeetanf hariiroo yoo hin qabanu tanee ilee lammi keenya diinan ajee fama jiru dura kan birra ga'aan isaan waan ta'aanf haawwasi Oromoo ala fi biyya keessa jiru tumsa fi deggersa barbaachisu akka isaan godhu deggersa ni gona.
7. Haawasii Oromoo biyya keessa fi biyya ala jiran hojii haawasuma fi walgargarsa tokkumman akka hojeetan, rakko Oromoo irrati hirira ykn gargarsa gaafataman akka wal qoodumsa tokko malee akka hirmatan ta'ee, dhaabba Oromoo miseensaa ta'aanf immoo akkata dhaabbichaaf kakuu galani hoji dabalatan gargaruu mirga fi dirqama dhunfa nama sana egamuu qaba.
8. Dhaabbilee Oromoo Hariiroo Oromoon biyya hoola fi Uummatoota Oromoo waliin jirachuuf deeman irrati imammataa ifaa ta'ee qabachuu qabu.
9. Dhaabbilee Oromoo Tarsimoo walo tokko hanga humatanti dhimma kana hordoof Dhaabbile siyyassa, Hayuuleen fi Hawassa Oromoo bakka hundati hirmana isaan akka godhan gochuun murtee tokko irra ga'uu qabna.

Weerarrii fi jeequmsi Malas Zenawi Uummata Oromoo, biyya Ityoophiyaa fi gutuumaa Gaanfaa Afrika irratti deemsisa jiru kun xumura kan argatuu Uummani Oromoo biyya Ityoophiyaa keessati abba biyya ta'ee nageenyaa amansisa fi tasgabbi yoo gadi dhaabbe qofaa. Uumman Gaanfa Afrika keessatti heedumnan beekamuu kun rakko isaa dhoksinee rakko biraf furmaata barbaduun of gowoomsudha. Ilmaan Tigraay immo humna waraanaa isaan Meeshaa amayaa fi nama isaani qoofaa ijaaran lammi keenya fixuuf qoophi xumuratan jiru. Amaa ilee namoon hedduun gaafi Oromoo ukamsaan diimokraasiidhan rakkon Ityoophiyaa furmaata argata jechuun guyyaa safaa nu sobu yaalu. Eritrean ilee rakko keessaa dabaretee utuu beektuu rakkoon Oromoo biyya Ityoophiyaa keessatti hikamuu qaba gara jeedhuutti deema jirti. Guyyaa hara'a kan kana kaafneef weerara wayyane balla Oromoo irratti godhamuf deemu kana of irra qoolachuu tokkon tokkon Oromoo waregama lubu dabalatee lammii isaa irratti gumachuuf akka of qoopheesun isin gaafachuu feedha. Rakkon keenyaa unumaa inis tokkummaa dhabuu, wal caabsuu keenyaa. Wayyaaneen kan sodatu tokkumma keenyaa malee qawee miti. Kanaaf immo haruma dhaabbilee

Oromoo tokko ta'uu keenyaa yoo labsane waayyaanee akka moonu shaakii tokko hin qabu. Diimokraasiin Ityoophiyaa Oromof furmaata hin ta'uu jene Wareegama hunda kafalee Uummata keenyaa Bilisoomsuun Mootummaa Oromiyya ijaruu qoofa.

## **6. OSA'n Rakkoo Uummataa Oromoo Kana Hiikkun Oromoo Salphina Irra Olchuu Qaba.**

Uummati Oromoo OSA atamti ilaala? Oromoon hara'aa yamuu bakka bu'aa dhabbee harka Uummataa murasa keessa jiru kanati ani qaba kan jeedhu keessa OSA'n isaa tokko. Dhaabbilee Oromoo waan isaan hojjechuu malan ilee kan barreesuf, wara Paarlamaa jiranf ilee seera Oromoof faayaduu kan qooratee qopheesuf OSA dha jedhen amana Uummani Oromoo. Gummin Paarlamaa Oromoo ilee OSA'n furtuu rakko Oromootti jedha. Diinii ilee OSA'n waan Oromoof malu hunda keessati Oromo Stratgisti Group jedhani amanu. OSA'n hoo mali irra jira? Wal-dhabbdeen dhaabbilee Oromoo facaasaa jiru kun isin hayuu kana birrati ilee caalaqisee siyaasaa isiin sodaachisee Siyaasaa fi Koreenti fagooti jeetani mana cufatani moo? Oromoo salphina keessa basuuf caaraqaa jirtu?. Kan biyyaati adeema jiru isin ibsuu yaalen jira. Yamuu biyyaat kun hundii nama keenyaara gaa jiru asiti Diasporat amoo mal hojjetaa jira? OSA'n maal hojjechuuf karoofatee ture? Maal hojjechuufis qopha'ee jira?, OSA'n immo dhaabba siyaasaa miti garuu siyaasaa ala immo miti. Siyaasaan ala yoomi iyuu ta'uu hindanda'uu. Keessatu immo maqaa kana qabatee, Oromoo Uummataa biyya isaa fi mirga isaa molqamee qabsa'aa jiru irra kana dhaalatee jarmiyaa OSA ani siyaasii Oromoo yoo na hin ilaalu jedhe dogogora. Wal dhaabdee dhaabbilee siyaasaa Oromoo siireesu danda'uu qaba. Wal dhabdee qooratee rakko hiikuun (Conflict resolution) hojii Ogeesootaf fi dirqama namoota beekumsa amayyaa qabaniti. Saayinsin Conflict hin qoorane, mirga fi haqa Uummataaf hin falmanee addunya irra hin jiru. Beekumsi fi hojjiin qoorannoo hayyuu Oromoo yeroo kami iyuu caalaa hara'aa nu barbaachisaa. Gababatti OSA'n Uummata isaaf waan hojjechuu qaba jeene yaanuu:-

1. Dhaabbilee Oromoo waggoota sagal (9) wal hirani diina dhisan wal irrati dula jiru. Bara darbee kasee amoo gara hawaasaatti ilee ce'ee nu facaasaa yamuu jiru kana furmaata mali itti yaane jira? Baruma barana wa'ee rakko tokkumma Oromoo odeesuu qoofa utuu hin tanee itti hojjene furmaata irra ga'uu qabna. Hawaasni fi haayyuu kan rakkina saba issa hin qorane, hikufiis hin tatafane gati hin qabu jechuun barbaachisa nati fakkata. Qooranno geggesun hojii OSA yoo ta'ee ilee Faca'iinsa dhaabbilee Oromoo gidduu dhalateen waldhaabdiin gara Uummati ce'aa jiru kana dhaabbuf furmaata barbaadun dirqama OSA ta'uu qaba akka miseensaa tokkotis akka jarmiyya tokkotis. Kanaaf Gummin Paarlamaa kan jenuu OSA'n rakkina jarmiolee Oromoo keessa jiru kana hikuuf qormata tokko godhe, namas jarmoolees waliti waame waan kun akka balinan mari'atame hikkamuf hojii kana fudhatee akka itti fufu gaafadha.
2. Oromoon maal barbaada? Akkuman gararaati caaqaasu yaale Oromoo bilisummaa qoofaa akka barbaadu isinif mirkaneesun barbaada. Gaafiin nu fulldura jirus akkamiti bilisummaa kenya argana waan jedhu akka ta'e hubane Tarsimmo fi karoora Bilisummaa tartiba hojii qoorannoo irratti hunda'e Uummata keenya fi dhaabbilee keenyaf lafa ka'uun dirqama lammumatti. OSA'n Uummataa isaa diinii meeqa irratti wal nyachaa jiru kana beekumsa fi dandeeti missensoota isaa hunda fayyadamee Oromoo abba biyya gochuun seena hara'aa bareesuu qaba.

3. Waan qoorannu hundi kan hojii irra oluu yoo Eenyumman Oromoo jiratee fi biyya Oromoo yoo ijaramee qofaa. Kun ta'uu banan ija qooranno keenya bakka itti hojii irra olchinu hin qabnu. Ga'een hayyuu Oromoo OSA jalatti gurma'aan irraa Eegamu hedduu dha. Ogeesotnii fi Hayyuun Oromoo hundi waan baraten wal gurmeesee Tarsiimoo (manefesto) Oromiyaa qopheesee dhiyeesuu qaba. Kun amma iyyuu wixinnen (framework) isaa lafa jira. Oromiyaan biyya akkamii ijara? Seeraa fi Heera attamiin haa bultu?; Paarlaamma akkamii haa qabattu? Sirna dinagdee/imaammata dinagdee/ akkamii haa qabattu? Saba fi sablami Oromoo waliin jirachuu malan irratti imammataa Oromiyya ifaa ta'ee lafaa qabachuu kan jedhu fi kkf: lafa qabaachuu qabna. Maqa Gummi Paarlamaa Oromoo wixinne Tarsimoo Oromiyya barreefama fulla 200\_300 ta'uu qopha'ee jira. Wixinne kan Ogeesi Oromoo hundi ogumma isaan jechun Ogeesi Seera, Barnootaa, Fayyaa, Qoonaa, Dinagidee, Hooraa, Hawwasummaa, Seena, Aadda, Waraana, Bulchinsaa, Kunnunsa naannoo fi kkf OSA jalatti damee dameen gurma'ee dandeetti isaa muxannoo biyya hunda irra waliti fidee akka Oromiyyaf ta'uuti qophefachuun amma.

Walumagalat Gumiin Paarlamaa Oromoo Imanaa inni OSAti keenu, OSA fi dhaabbilee Oromoo hunda waliin hojjechuun, Tokkummaa Oromoo tiksuun wal dukka hirirsu, Dhaabbilee Oromoo walti fiduun diina irratti akka xiyyeefatan gochuu, Tarsimoo Bilisummaa Oromoo bakkan ga'uu danda'uu qopheefachuu, Manafeestoo Oromiyyan bilisoomtee itti hojjeetuu qopheefachuun Motuummaa Oromiyaa ijaaruun dhimmota bodeeti hafan yoo ta'ee ilee bor utuu hin tanee har'aa murteefanee hojii irra olchuu qabna. Oromoon hara'aa dhaabba cimma fi tokkummaa Oromoo tikisuu ni danda'aa jeedhu keessaa OSAn isaa hangaafa. OSAn Oromoo beektotaa gosa hunda of keessati amatee waan jiruuf rakko Oromoo hunda furuuf dandeeti waan qabuuf rakko kana keessa akka nu basuu dhamacha beektoon Oromoo hund ilee akka OSA cimnaa dhabatan ni gaafaadha.

Hayyuun Oromoo kanneen qaanqee qabsoo bilisummaa qabsiisaniif fi qabsoo bilisummaa Oromoof warri wareegama baasan, akkasumas nutis of barree akka mirga keenyaaf falmannu warri nu taasisan hundi maqaa Uummata Oromoon galatni keessan bilisummaa haa ta'uun jedha.

**Injjifaannoon Uummataa Oromootiif**

**Getachew Jigi Demekssa PhD**

**Dura ta'aa Gummi Paarlamaa Oromoo**

**Haggayyaa 1-2 /2009**

**Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A**

## **THE CRISIS OF GLOBAL CAPITALISM: CONTEXTUALIZING THE OROMO STRUGGLE**

PROFESSOR, WILLIAM I. ROBINSON\*

\*William I. Robinson is Professor of Sociology, Global and International Studies, and Latin American and Iberian Studies, at the University of California at Santa Barbara. His latest book is *Latin America and Global Capitalism: A Critical Globalization Perspective* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008)

*Extracts* from keynote address delivered before the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual meeting of the Oromo Studies Association, August 1, 2009, Atlanta

I am not an expert on Africa. I did spend three years in the late 1970s as a student in East and West Africa, where I studied African history and political economy. It was during those formative years that I forged an anti-colonial consciousness and commitment to struggles for social justice. I traveled in the early 1980s from Africa to Central America to participate in the revolutionary movements then breaking out in that region, and stayed there into the early 1990s, at which point I returned to the United States after a 13 year journey abroad to undertake my graduate studies. In 1996 I took up an appointment at the University of Tennessee where I met my friend and colleague, Professor Asafa Jalata, one of the leading scholars worldwide of Oromo studies. It was thanks to him that I first learned of the Oromo struggle and gained a greater historical understanding of the Horn of Africa. But I was unable after leaving Tennessee in 1998 to continue my engagement with Oromo studies. My expertise is globalization, Latin America, and U.S. foreign policy, and the intensive focus of my work is the critique of global capitalism.

I therefore cannot speak to you today about the Ethiopian empire and the Oromo struggle – on these matters I am *your student!* Rather, I wish to focus on global capitalism and its crisis. Globalization is fundamentally altering politics, economic processes, social forces, and terrains of struggle everywhere. Events in recent years in Ethiopia have unfolded within the world historic dynamics of capitalist globalization, and now in the context of the system's crisis. Global capitalism and its crisis is the broader context of Oromo struggles. This “big picture,” I

hope, will offer great explanatory power and therefore be useful to you in your own analyses of the Ethiopian empire and the Oromo reality.

Global capitalism is in “its worst crisis since the 1930s,” as many have pointed out. But it is more than that. It is truly a crisis of humanity, of civilizational proportions. The stakes are so high, the means of destruction so massive, the unfolding ecological holocaust so severe, that our very survival is at risk. We face a crossroads in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, an unstable and open-ended transition that involves much chaos and presents dangers as well as opportunities. Any solution to the crisis requires not just political action but also historical-theoretical understanding of this moment.

### **Ethiopia, Oromia, and the Epochs of World Capitalism**

How has world capitalism qualitatively evolved in recent decades? Globalization represents a qualitatively new transnational stage in the ongoing evolution of world capitalism. Among the fundamental shifts in the system are the following four:

- 1) The rise of *truly transnational capital* and the integration of every country into new global production and financial system;
- 2) The appearance of a *transnational capitalist class*, a class group grounded global markets and circuits of accumulation rather than national markets and circuits. This transnational capitalist class is a new global ruling class.
- 3) The rise of a *transnational state apparatus* – a loose network comprised of supranational political and economic institutions together with national state apparatuses that have been penetrated and transformed by transnational forces.
- 4) Novel relations of power and inequality, and new modalities of domination, in global society.

If globalization represents a new stage, what stages preceded it? In periodizing the distinct epochs of world capitalism we can observe that each epoch has had major implications for Oromia:

- 1) The epoch of mercantile capitalism, or of primitive accumulation, ran roughly from the conquest of the Americas, starting in the symbolic year 1492, to another symbolic



year, that of the French Revolution, 1789. It was during this sweeping epoch that the world market came into existence, the system began its outward expansion, and the inter-state system was created. Europe at this time began to encroach on Africa, reshaping African processes such as state formation, including state formation and social development in Oromia and what today we refer to as the Horn of Africa;

- 2) The epoch of industrial, or competitive, capitalism ran from 1789 to the late 1800s. It was in this epoch that the bourgeoisie consolidated its power as the ruling class, the nation-state became the principal form of world political organization, the industrial revolution took place, and the system entered a frantic new round of expansion, including the outright colonization of Africa by the European powers. It was during this epoch that Ethiopia begins its own imperial expansion and conquest of the Oromo, a process that cannot be understood outside of the larger systemic dynamics;
- 3) By the late 1800s we transition into the epoch of what I refer to as national corporate capitalism and what others have called “monopoly” capitalism, a period that opens with the classical imperialism of which Lenin wrote and brings us into the 1970s. We saw during this period the consolidation of national markets, the rise of giant national corporations that in the wake of World War II began to internationalize, and of course, more of the ceaseless expansion of the system. This was also a time of revolutions – the Bolshevik, Chinese, and Cuban, to name but a few –the rise of the Third World, great anti-colonial and national liberation struggles, decolonization, and transitions to neo-colonialism. Ethiopia during this time experienced a deeper integration into the world capitalist system under the regime of Haile Selassie as Oromo labor and resources became more fully captured by world capitalism via Ethiopian domination.

### **The Breakdown of National Corporate Capitalism and the Onset of Globalization**

In the wake of World War II, after the stormy period of fierce class struggles in the cores of world capitalism, world wars, and the Great Depression, a new social structure of accumulation became consolidated at the world level, that of “Fordist-Keynesian capitalism.” Fordism involved a new model of standardized mass production and mass consumption in the affluent regions together with a capital-labor relation that combined tight control by capital over labor and over cultural and political life with pacification of that labor by mass consumption and the promise of rising standards of living. Keynesianism integrated into the structure of world capitalism the measures proposed by the British economist John Keynes, who argued that in order to avoid crisis the state must intervene to regulate accumulation, to redistribute values, and to boost demand.

Fordist-Keynesian capitalism took the model form of social welfare, social democratic, and “New Deal” states in the First World. In the Third World it took the model form of developmentalist states, although of course only a minority of middle and urban working classes in the former colonial regions experienced rising standards of living as they became integrated into developmental capitalism. In the so-called “Second World,” it took the model form of self-declared “socialism” that involved as well a rapid rise in living standards coupled with tight control from above. While there were countless variants the Fordist-Keynesian social structure of accumulation all three models shared two key components: a major role for the state in regulating accumulation and a significant redistributive component.

National corporate capitalism broke down in the 1970s. Nation-state capitalism entered into crisis. In essence, capital outgrew the set of nation-state/inter-state institutions through which it had developed previously. As the Fordist-Keynesian social structure of accumulation began to unravel, all three models experienced crises of legitimacy. The key period was 1968-1973. We were moving towards systemic crisis, a crisis that was as much political and ideological as it was economic.

The year 1968 symbolized a rapidly expanding counter-hegemony at the systemic level. A year earlier, Che Guevara had been captured and executed in Bolivia. The year 1968 saw the uprising of students and workers in Paris, the Prague Spring, and the Tlatelolco massacre in Mexico City to repress the growing mass movement of workers, students, and peasants. The Viet Cong launched the Tet Offensive in 1968, marking the beginning of the end of the U.S. war against Indochina. In China, the Cultural Revolution was at its height. In the United States, the Black and Chicano liberation movements, the anti-war movement, the women’s and the counter-cultural movement placed ruling groups on the defensive. This was the height of armed national liberation movements against remaining colonial regimes and against dictatorships, of radical and socialist-oriented projects.

Then came the economic – structural – crisis in 1973; a crisis of profits, of investment opportunities, of energy and of financial stability, expressed as “stagflation” (inflation + stagnation). Working and popular classes around the world refused to shoulder the burden of this crisis. Coming on the heels of worldwide mass struggles they were able in that decade to exercise enough collective strength to make it impossible for capital to transfer to them the burden of the crisis. The mechanisms of hegemony were breaking down. This is what the elites from the Trilateral Commission famously referred to at that time as the “crisis of democracy,” by

which of course they did not mean that democracy was under threat but rather that popular forces all over the world were demanding *too much* democracy and that the system could not contain these forces from below within the logic of the prevailing system and its forms of cultural, political and economic organization. This was a *breakdown of consensual domination*.

In Ethiopia mass uprisings took place – part and parcel of this worldwide crisis. This was the eve of the overthrow the Haile Selassie regime.

Dominant groups from the cores of the world capitalist system asked themselves how they could they undertake a vast restructuring of the system. How could they face the crisis, reverse the strength of popular classes, re-impose discipline, and reconstitute hegemony? Emergent transnationally-oriented elites began to organize. They set up in 1973, among many other forums, the Trilateral Commission. In essence, capital responded to the crisis of Fordist-Keynesian capitalism by *going global*. The 1980s and 1990s, we saw the unraveling of redistributive social welfare projects in the First World, the breakdown of developmentalist projects in the Third World, and the outright collapse of the statist redistributive projects in the Second World. It was clear that “socialism in one country,” nor “Keynesianism in one country,” were any longer viable in the emerging stage of global capitalism.

Capital launched a worldwide offensive to break free from nation-state constraints to accumulation. It achieved a new global mobility that brought about a change in the worldwide correlation of class and social forces. In the latter decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a new model of capitalism emerged. Four mechanisms, among others, stand out that allowed new global elites to restore the prospects for worldwide for accumulation:

First is the imposition of a new capital-labor relation or the normalization of new systems of labor control, based on a “cheapening” of labor made possible by global capital mobility and by new technologies that allowed capital to integrate and reorganize production worldwide. The capital-labor relation has been deregulated everywhere as labor has been flexibilized and casualized. New modes of labor control include outsourcing, deunionization, feminization, contract and contingent labor, and so on. The “Fordist labor regime” involved certain reciprocities between capital and labor mediated by the state and it has been replaced by the “Walmartization of labor” and the free trade zone, or maquiladora, regime, whereby workers face the unmediated domination of capital.

Second is a new round of the extensive and intensive expansion of capitalism. This expansion has been intensive in the sense that there are no longer any regions that lay outside the

system. For the first time in world history the entire planet has been brought into a single capitalist system so that we can speak of a new *globality*. The countries that had tried to chart an alternative to integration into the system, such as the former Soviet bloc or the Third World revolutionary states, have been incorporated. But extensive expansion also includes a deeper transnational capitalist penetration of remote regions *within* nations that had previously been less fully integrated into capitalism and its logic or that had managed to retain some degree of autonomy – such as Amazonia in South America, Chiapas in Southern Mexico, or Oromia in Ethiopia. The expansion of world capitalism has also been intensive, in the sense that public and community spheres that previously laid outside the logic of accumulation or of exchange-value have been commodified – turned into profit-making spheres controlled by capital – through privatization, intellectual property rights, and other mechanisms. Hence educational and health systems have been privatized, as have basic public services such as water and electricity. Non-capitalist forms of property such as community land holdings have been progressively broken up and turned into capitalist property. New communications and other technologies have allowed capital to colonize public spaces and culture. In sum, the tentacles of the new global capitalism reach much deeper than previously into every nook and cranny of the world; the domination of capital becomes ever more encompassing and imposing.

Third is the creation of a global legal and regulatory structure, which includes the World Trade Organization and many other institutions, to facilitate emerging globalized circuits of accumulation.

And fourth is the neo-liberal program. The well-known package of measures that are imposed through structural adjustment programs includes liberalization, privatization, deregulation, austerity, and so forth. In the broader picture, neo-liberal structural adjustment is intended to establish the conditions for the free operation of capital within and across national borders – to create a single unified field for global capitalism.

Global capitalism - neo-liberalism and structural adjustment – really begins in Ethiopia with the fall of the Mengistu regime in 1991. Meles Zenawi is the “poster child” of the good neo-liberal African. The Tigrayan regime has been the instrument of global capitalism. It has opened up the country to transnational corporate plunder and has undertaken massive privatizations (to transnational capital and to Ethiopian class groups and elites). The entrance of Ethiopia into the World Trade Organization will accelerate this process.

Ironically, the Mengistu regime created the pre-conditions for global capitalism in the country. For instance, its policies of removing millions of Oromos from their lands to make way for state farms created the perfect structural conditions later on for the entrance of transnational agribusiness, for a market in land, and for a dispossessed mass of Oromos as cheap and available labor for global capitalism. The Habasha elite historically allied with outside powers that they could use to reproduce their own internal domination. As of 1991, this alliance between the Habasha elites and transnational capital/global elites has become more organic, the former absorbing itself into latter.

### **Transnational Production, Transnational Classes, and the Transnational State**

The crucial defining feature of global capitalism is the *rise of truly transnational capital*. Transnational capital is now the hegemonic fraction of capital on a world scale. The key thing here is the globalization of production itself – the dismantling of national economies and their reconstitution as segments of a globally-integrated production system. New globalized circuits of accumulation have particular properties that can, and have been, studied. Production processes have been fragmented and decentralized around the world. There is a network structure to the new globally-integrated production system. Vast chains of subcontracting and outsourcing link production circuits in each country and region to this larger global production system. National financial systems are a thing of the past; they have been integrated into a new and unprecedented single global financial system. This is a big part of the story of the current crisis.

Another key process has been transnational class formation. Both dominant and subordinate classes are transnationalizing. A global working class runs the factories, offices, and farms of the global economy. A new transnational capitalist class, or transnational bourgeoisie, is made up of the owners and managers of transnational capital – that is, the transnational corporations and financial institutions. The rise of this transnational capitalist class has been documented in an expanding body of empirical research and has taken place through such diverse mechanisms as the extension of foreign direct investment, transnational mergers and acquisitions, globalized stock markets, the transnational ownership of shares, and so forth. The transnational capitalist class is a class group with a subjective consciousness of itself and its interests. The members of this class group socialize with each other – for instance, in the annual meetings of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland – and develop a transnational class consciousness. In contrast, the global working class is “in itself” but not “for itself.”

Politically and subjectively, globalization has worked as a centripetal force for transnationally-oriented capitalists and as a centrifugal force for the global working class.

Dominant class relations have shifted worldwide in favor of new transnational fractions among dominant groups tied to global economic processes. Neo-liberalism is fundamentally a program of transnational capital. Transnationally-oriented elites captured governments and the “commanding heights” of state policymaking around the world in the 1980s and 1990s, symbolized by the coming to power of the Reagan and Thatcher regimes. They utilized national state apparatuses to advance sweeping globalization. There are still local, national, and regional capitalists, but local capital must link up to transnational circuits to remain competitive, and local state elites must link their states to these circuits to retain their status.

In Ethiopia this project has been full of contradictions. Nonetheless, it is clear that transnationally-oriented groups have emerged to assume the reigns of the transnational agenda inside the country. Jalata (2006: 46) has observed:

The military and political leaders of TPLF/EPRDF have emerged as a new capitalist class [through illegal means and] dominate the Ethiopian political economy... Using state power, this new class has expropriated state corporations in the name of privatization and established joint businesses with either local investors or foreign corporations.

In fact, this pattern is similar to Latin America and elsewhere, whereby local transnationally-oriented groups emerge through privatization and neo-liberalism. In Ethiopia, this process has been highly ethnicized and predicated on Habasha domination over the state and over Oromia.

Another key aspect of capitalist globalization is the transnationalization of the state. We are witnessing the supersession of the nation-state as the organizing principle of world capitalism. This does *not* mean that the nation state is disappearing or is irrelevant. Rather, an emergent transnational institutional network plays an increasing role in organizing global accumulation. Capitalism cannot exist without the state. Nation-states are central to the political organization of the system but they are becoming transformed and absorbed into the larger institutional structures of a transnational state apparatus. The emerging transnational state institutionalizes the new class relations between global capitalism and global labor. For instance, when the IMF conditions loans on the reform of national labor codes so that workers become flexibilized it is imposing the new capital-labor relations.

Out of this emerging transnational institutionality the new class relations and social practices of global capitalism are becoming congealed and institutionalized. The state as a class

relation is becoming transnationalized. The transnational state generates the conditions for globalized capital accumulation. For example, when the United Nations sends peacekeeping forces to Haiti or to the Sudan it is attempting to resolve local conflicts and achieve the stability necessary for global markets to function. The first thing the United States – as the most powerful single organ of a larger transnational state apparatus – decreed once it had occupied Iraq was that the country was open to investors from anywhere in the world and that the U.S. political military occupation would provide the juridical and coercive canopy necessary for transnational capitalists to operate in the country. The U.S. state now functions less to establish a new U.S. hegemony in competition with other powers than to defend and advance global capitalism. And we should hold no illusions about the Obama administration. Obama's policies actually strengthen – that is, re-legitimate – the role of the U.S. state as the principal instrument of global capitalism. The U.S. president laid out very clearly in his July 2009 speech in Ghana the current agenda of global capitalism in Africa.

Now, there is a fundamental contradiction here: an economy that is globalizing within the political framework of a nation-state/inter-state system. This helps us, but only in part, to understand the current crisis. The transnational state apparatus – these political institutions of global capitalism – are incipient and unable to regulate or stabilize the system. Before turning to the current crisis, let us recall that global capitalism is fraught with contradictions and observe how these contradictions have unfolded in Ethiopia.

### **Ethiopia and Global Capitalism**

In 1997 I wrote:

[Transnational elites] hoped that the leadership of the Tigrayans, the Eritreans, the Amhara, the Oromo, and other ethno-national groups in the Ethiopian empire, would develop a working consensus amongst themselves around implementing the transnational agenda in Ethiopia: 1) structural adjustment and the opening of the empire to free market global capitalism; 2) the installation of a functioning polyarchic (“democratic”) political system in which elites of different groups would peacefully compete with and accommodate one another, thus assuring stability as the empire opened up to transnational capital...The elite leadership of Ethiopia's principal groups and movements, namely the Amhara, the Tigrayan, and the Oromo, were expected to cohere into a national elite attuned to the transnational agenda....[However], the project of global capitalism for Ethiopia has only been partially successful, specifically because U.S. officials and global elites have never been able to grasp the nature and extent of ethnonational domination, especially of the Oromo.

That is what I wrote in 1997. Such ethno-national domination, on the one hand, has been essential to the whole history of world capitalism; it is *constitutive* of world capitalism. On the other hand, such domination has presented obstacles in different countries to smooth transitions to global capitalism. For example, apartheid was incompatible with the new epoch of global capitalism. Those obstacles were overcome by global and local elites in South Africa. They have not been overcome in Israel/Palestine, and they have not been overcome in Ethiopia. The transnational elite objective is precisely to avoid reliance on regimes that enjoy little internal legitimacy and that are not solidly rooted in a constituted civil society, and must therefore resort to state repression rather than to mechanisms of hegemony, consensus-building, and cooptation. This transnational project is extremely difficult to implement in Ethiopia precisely because mass repression of the main super-exploited segment of the empire – the Oromo people – has been an institutionalized, indeed, structural feature of empire.

We should note that the stabilization of global capitalism in Ethiopia requires the development of Oromo political and economic elites that can act as local mediators of the global system and can exercise hegemonic control over the Oromo masses. Yet this is a contradictory situation. Habasha ethno-national domination undermines this effort to create an Oromo elite identified with global capitalism. Jalata (2006: 34) notes:

The Meles regime believes that Oromo intellectuals, businessmen and women, and community and religious leaders are the enemy of ‘the Ethiopian revolution.’ .... Its organ known as *Hizbawi Adera*.... asserts that ‘*only by eliminating the Oromo educated elite and capitalist class will the Oromo people be freed from narrow nationalism.*’

This is a fundamental contradiction of the project of global capitalism in Ethiopia. As far as global capitalism in Ethiopia is concerned, Oromia is a region with vast resources that transnational capital covets:

- It provides the main source water for whole region and of hydro-electric power;
- It has the best agricultural lands, a key breadbasket for the Horn of Africa, and is a potential center for large-scale transnational corporate agri-business;
- It has major reserves of natural gas and oil (the latter is also located in Ogadenia)
- It has massive mineral resources – gold, silver, platinum, uranium, marble, nickel, sulfur, and iron-ore, among others;
- It has a 40+ million-strong labor reserve.



Opening up Oromia to global capitalism has been predicated on the political vehicle of the Tigrayan regime, for whom political power is its own coercive instrument assuring access to those resources, and which is used as well to help displace class and social contradictions within the Habasha population.

### **Global Crisis: Financial Speculation and Militarized Accumulation**

There are four interrelated dimensions to the global crisis:

- 1) It is a crisis of *social reproduction, of global polarization*. As has been well documented, global inequalities have reached barbaric levels and continue to get worse;
- 2) It is a crisis of *overaccumulation*, a dimension to which I will return momentarily;
- 3) It is a crisis of *legitimacy and political / authority*. States face spiraling fiscal and legitimacy crises and global hegemony, in the Gramscian sense of consensual domination, is breaking down;
- 4) It is a crisis of ecological sustainability. The current global capitalist order is unsustainable. An ecological holocaust is underway. It is already having a devastating impact on the poor and it will aggravate the other dimensions of the crisis.

I want to focus here on the second dimension of this global crisis. In broad strokes, globalization should be seen as capital's response to previous episodes of crisis, especially to the crisis of the 1970s. Globalization opened up vast opportunities for accumulation worldwide and in the 1980s and 1990s transnational capital experienced a frenzied period of accumulation. But by the turn of the century this expansion ran up against certain limits. The opportunities to accumulate through privatizations began to dry up as much of the public assets around the world became privatized. Once the old Soviet bloc and Third World revolutionary states integrated into the global market there were no longer any new regions to bring into the system. Global markets reached saturation and overcapacity set in. By the new century the system was headed towards a structural crisis. The global economy expanded as the global market contracted. The

economy generated ever larger surplus while opportunities to absorb that surplus diminished. Once the boom of the 1980s and 1990s wound down the opportunities to profitably reinvest the surplus began to dry up.

Crisis theory posits that this is a fundamental contradiction of the system: over-accumulation follows periods of hyper-accumulation. The capitalist system is faced with the permanent challenge of how to unload surpluses and hence to sustain accumulation. The system has been stumbling into one crisis scenario after another. First there was the Mexican “peso crisis” of 1995. This was followed by the Asian financial meltdown of 1997-98, followed by collapses in Russia, Turkey, Brazil, and elsewhere, and then the collapse and social explosion in Argentina, and worldwide recession in 2001. The transnational elite sounded alarm bells. George Soros, a global financier, multi-billionaire, and leading organic intellectual of the global elite, famously warned of the need to “save capitalism from itself.”

By the turn of the century, two major mechanisms for unloading surplus and sustaining accumulation took over in the global system: *financial speculation* and *militarized accumulation*.

With regard to financial speculation, this has been a finance-led process of globalization. Transnational finance is the most mobile sector of capital. Thanks to computer and information technologies and financial deregulation it has achieved near total, frictionless mobility. The so-called “revolution in finance” has involved the creation of all sorts of new financial instruments, or “derivatives,” including mortgage backed securities, futures markets, hedge funds, pyramiding of assets, and many more. The purpose of these derivatives is to make every pile of money – both positive money (credit) and negative money (debt) – a commodity that can be traded and therefore a source of accumulation.

Transnational finance capital has developed new powers to appropriate and manipulate values. And it has proved to be *utterly predatory*. The sequence of speculative waves in the global casino includes:

- Real estate investment in global cities and the creation of a global property market;
- Several cycles of stock market inflations, or bubbles, followed by busts, including the inflation and then the bust from 1997 to 2003 of the dot-com stock market that had so related transnational investors;

- An escalation of speculation in derivatives involving an unprecedented wave of speculation with debt worldwide;
- The uncontrolled expansion of the U.S. consumer debt, which grew five-fold from 1980 to 2001, jumping just from 1998 to 2008 from \$100 billion to over \$1 trillion, which temporarily converted the United States into the market of last resort for the world economy;
- The wave of speculation in global commodities markets, particularly in food and energy markets, in 2007 and 2008, which drove up food prices worldwide, sparking food riots around the world and throwing millions more into hunger.

This global casino capitalism involves an ever-greater expansion of what is known as fictitious capital, or money thrown into circulation without any base in commodities, in productive activity. The gap has been growing rapidly between the global speculative economy and the productive – or what the mass media calls the “real” – economy. In 2000, the IMF reported, for instance, that the worldwide trade in goods and services was less than \$10 trillion for the entire previous *year* whereas the *daily* movement in currency speculation stood at \$3.5 trillion! We have been witnessing a historically unprecedented de-coupling of finance from productive activity and from real, that is, material, wealth creation. By the early 21<sup>st</sup> century massive concentrations of transnational finance capital were destabilizing the system. We finally reached the limits to this “financial fix” to the problem of over-accumulation. The collapse of the U.S. consumer mortgage market, in particular, the sub-prime market, in 2007, triggered the devastating collapse of the global financial system in September 2008.

Meanwhile, the U.S. state has militarized global accumulation. The cutting edge of accumulation has shifted from computer and information technologies to a military-security-industrial-construction-petroleum complex. The misnamed “war on terrorism” and the invasion and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan have cost trillions of dollars. In 2003, military spending accounted for a full 70 percent of the total rise in the U.S. GDP. This state-organized spending is in no way limited to the United States. To the contrary, these resources flow through the worldwide network structures of the global economy – these are the “open veins” of the new global economy. For instance, contracts awarded by the U.S. state to such global corporations as Halliburton for “reconstruction” in Iraq are in turn dished out through subcontracting and

outsourcing networks to Indian and Chinese supply firms, Saudi Arabian and Kuwaiti construction companies, Jordanian engineering enterprises, Philippine labor recruiters, South African and Colombia security (mercenary) firms, and so on. In this way, U.S. military spending throws fresh firewood on the smoldering embers of the global economy.

The “war on terrorism” is a convenient political-ideological mechanism to legitimate the transition to a global war economy. And the Ethiopian regime has managed to find a new political niche as an instrument of the so-called “war on terror” in the Horn.

How will this crisis unfold? Is it a *cyclical* crisis? The recessions of the early 1980s, the early 1990s, and the early 21<sup>st</sup> century were clearly cyclical. But the current crisis is more than cyclical; it is *structural*, as were the crises of the 1970s, and before that, of the 1930s. Structural crises are crises of restructuring, meaning that the only way out of the crisis is to restructure the system. Restructuring in the wake of the 1930s crisis resulted in the Fordist-Keynesian model, and restructuring in the wake of the 1970s crisis led us into globalization. Is it a *systemic* crisis, that is, a crisis that will result in a change to a new system? Well, not at this time. Whether or not a structural crisis becomes a systemic crisis depends on the response of distinct social forces to crisis. What are some of the responses, and the alternative futures, we can discern? There are many possible scenarios. Social change is not predetermined and is always open-ended. I can imagine, among others, four possible scenarios, none of which are mutually exclusive:

- 1) A global neo-Keynesianism. This would be a project that seeks to save the system from itself from its own destructive tendencies through such reforms as regulation of the global financial system and the introduction of some redistributive measures in the global economy. Those seeking a global reformism range from elites such as Joseph Stiglitz and George Soros, to governments such as that of Obama, forums such as the G-20 and several of the United Nations agencies.
- 2) A resurgent leftist project. Anti-capitalist, socialist, radical reformist and populist programs and movements are spreading. The World Social Forum and the proliferating social movements of the global justice movement, with their rallying cry, “another world is possible,” are indicative of this project. The “weakest link” politically speaking in the project of global capitalism is Latin America, where Venezuela is attempting to construct a “21<sup>st</sup> century socialism.”

- 3) A 21<sup>st</sup> century fascism. The need for mass social control in the face of crisis gives a powerful impetus to neo-fascist projects, which are evident everywhere, from the United States and Europe, to Colombia and Ethiopia.
- 4) A global collapse; a “new dark ages,” or global warlordism. This is the so-called “Somali scenario” at the global level.

### **Global Crisis and the Oromo Struggle**

The global crisis presents grave dangers but also opens up space for the influence of social forces from below and for new ideas to flourish as we step into the unknown. Let us recall the theme of this 23<sup>rd</sup> annual conference of the Oromo Studies Association: “looking for opportunities in crisis.” In my view, the only hope for a resolution of this crisis is to massively redistribute wealth and power downward to the poor majority in global society. Such a redistribution will come about not by the good will of those from above but by mass struggle by those from below coordinated across national and regional borders and involving the development of transnational counterhegemonies.

With regard specifically to the Oromo situation, I wrote in 1997:

What is to be done regarding the Oromo liberation struggle? That is, as a matter of course, a decision for the Oromo people. But it is a decision that must be taken within the real constraints to social change and emancipation that global capitalism places on each nation and people...I do not know whether Oromo liberation can be achieved within an Ethiopian nation-state [for ex, through autonomy or through majority rule], or if achieving such liberation requires the establishment of an independent Oromia..... What is progressive at any historic conjuncture is what advances the interests of popular majorities – their control over the conditions of their existence and their prospects for social emancipation.

By way of conclusion, I would add here that the mounting crisis in Ethiopia will merge more closely now with the global crisis and could generate an explosive situation as we move towards the 2010 elections. The global crisis is current macro context and global conjuncture for the Oromo struggle. However this struggle continues in 2009 and on, it will unfold under the larger conditions of the crisis of global capitalism.

**References**

Jalata, Asafa. 2006. "The Impact of Ethiopian State Terrorism and Globalization on the Oromo National Movement," *The Journal of Oromo Studies*, Volume 13, Numbers 1 & 2, July, pp. 19-56.

Robinson, William I. 1997. "Global Capitalism and the Oromo Liberation Struggle: Theoretical Notes on U.S. Policy Towards the Ethiopian Empire," *The Journal of Oromo Studies*, Volume 4, Numbers 1 & 2, pp. 1-46.

## **THE ROLE OF REVOLUTIONARY OROMO ARTISTS IN BUILDING OROMUMMA: THE CASE OF USMAYYOO MUSA AND EBISSA ADDUNYA**

Kulani Jalata

Across this planet, people have used music in diverse ways. For many, music is not only an expression of merely one's culture; it is also a vehicle for vocalizing social and political outcries. Music has been used to artistically protest against unacceptable conditions and treatment such as oppression and state repression, to communicate, to relieve psychological or physical stress and strain, and to relay significant political messages to the general masses. From the "We Shall Overcome" musical outcry of the Civil Rights Movement in the US to the music of anti-Apartheid movements in South Africa, music has become a vital mode of social relief and political expression.

Today, I would like to particularly look at revolutionary musical artists from two Oromo music bands that formed in the early 1990s when the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) joined the transitional government of Ethiopia. Called the Hawwisoo Caffee Gada Band and the Bilisumma Band, these bands and their artists were pushing forth through their music the urgent need for national self-determination, freedom, and democracy for the Oromo people. Within these bands, songwriters, poets, instrumentalists, musicians, and vocalists came together to create music that not only artistically retrieved and showcased Oromo history and culture, but that also reminded the people of the oppressive and exploitative conditions in which they were living, conditions that they needed to vocally and forthrightly stand against. Particularly, their revolutionary music inspired, agitated, and empowered the Oromo people to not give up their struggle against the tyrannical, murderous Ethiopian regime. Put shortly, these artists creatively developed revolutionary Oromo music to further advance and disseminate Oromuumma—the manifestation of Oromo identity, culture, and nationalism.

From the two bands I mentioned earlier, today I am going to focus on two particular artists and the significant impact their revolutionary music has made on building and developing Oromuumma: Usmayyoo Muussa and Ebbisa Addunya. Specifically, I am going to critically examine how these heroic musical martyrs politicized the Oromo identity, culture, and vocalized the Oromo national movement for democracy and independence. Overall, my presentation will be threefold: 1) I will provide biosketches of these three artists, 2) Within these biosketches, I will

look at the essence and characteristics of particular excerpts from some of their musical works, and 3) I will, within the biosketches and musical excerpts, examine their contributions to building Oromummaa and developing the Oromo national movement.

But, before I begin, I would like to share with you a short compilation of individuals who were either in the Hawwisoo Caffee Band or the Bilisumma Band and who were murdered by the Ethiopian regime. The reason why I am doing this is because although I am going to be focusing on two individuals today, I want it to be known that there were many, and that my research on revolutionary Oromo musical artists is an on-going process. I am in other words saying that I am not finished with investigating the injustices that revolutionary Oromo musical artists have faced due to the Ethiopian regime.

Oromo artists who have been killed by the current regime include:

**Hime Yusuf** singer and musician, Chafe Gada Band, killed in Hararge 1997

**Kulani Boru** female vocalist, Chafe Gada Band, Hararge 1997

**Bonsiso Challa** singer, Chafe Gada Band, Hararge 1992

**Hordofa Barento** traditional dancer, Chafe Gada Band, Hararge 1992

**Jalal** drama producer, Chafe Gada Band, Hararge 1992

**Sabontu Barentu** female vocalist, Chafe Gada Band, Bale 1997

**Ayantuu Borana** female traditional dancer, Chafe Gada Band, Bale 1997<sup>i</sup>

Artists who have disappeared, or in other words, murdered secretly since the present regime came to power include:

**Jirenya Ayana**, singer, Gada Band, Addis Ababa 1996

**Basha Hussein**, female traditional dancer, Bilisuma Band, Addis Ababa 1999

**Fufa Duguma**, poet, Addis Ababa 1997

**Darartu Bona**, female vocalist, Bale 1997

**Abdulhakim (Shefis)**, singer, Chafe Gada Band, Bale 1997

**Adem Wake**, singer, Addis Ababa 1997<sup>ii</sup>

I would also like to mention that there are several Oromo revolutionary artists who have been imprisoned, tortured, and were forced to leave the country to live in exile. Many of these artists are continuing their revolutionary music and have never abandoned their commitment to musically vocalize the Oromo national movement.

The two revolutionary musical artists on which my discussion will focus on were born in opposite regions of Oromia. One was born in eastern Oromia, the other in the west. Usmayyoo



Mussaa was born in Haaji, Haroomayaa, Hararghe, Eastern Oromia in January 1963 to a father named Musa and a mother named Aashee. As a youth, Usmayyoo did not receive a formal education; he became a merchant who captured and sold fish and other commodities to hotels in Dire Dawa.<sup>iii</sup> Those who knew him said that he was always a very social, friendly, kind, and respected person.<sup>iv</sup>

But, Usmayyoo had an interest in singing; because of this interest, he soon became acquainted with and close to two singers and songwriters named Kadir Sai'di and Abdi Mohammed (also known as Abdi Qophe). Abdi Qophe was a playwright, poet, and artist whose song writing not only heavily influence Usmayyoo, but the following artists: Ali Birraa, Adam Harun, Kadir Sa'id, Abbitow Kabbade, Halloo Dawwee, Fandishe Mul'ata (Mhammad Nur), Hirpha Ganfure, Qamar Yusuf, Adnan Mohammad, Shaabe Sheeko, Qasim Adam, Rayyaa Abba Maccaa, Usmayyoo Mussa, Abdi Abraham, Abdi Habib, Callaa Caracar and others. I just wanted to note this shortly because I was expecting to also present on Abdi Qophe today, but I am still awaiting certain sources. Hopefully, he will be in the OSA publications.

So, Usmayyoo learned much from Abdi Qophe and eventually began his own singing career. But aside from loving to sing, what Usmayyoo also loved very much was his people, the Oromo people. He could not bear the mistreatment, abuse, and exploitation that the Oromo people were facing from the Ethiopian government. He chose to vocalize his response to the oppression and injustices his people were facing through his music; he became a revolutionary Oromo nationalist singer. To express this love and strong defense he had for his people, he sang for his people by delivering profound messages that relayed his deep commitment and support for the Oromo national struggle for independence.<sup>v</sup>

In one of his songs, Usmayyoo sang the following:

**Jireenya walaabni mirga dhuumamneefi sarbamenee hin teeynu,  
Olaadhaan gabroomne, qabsoon bilisoomna, kenna hin eeganu. Fafaa gabruumaani  
badhaane, hin teeynu, Harqoota gabruuma hammaa ofiraa gannuu.**

Which translates into the following:

*We were born free so we cannot live chained.  
We were enslaved by our neighbors, but we will liberate ourselves.  
We cannot live with the scar of slavery  
We will fight until we get rid of the yoke of colonialism.*

With lyrics as such, Usmayyoo wanted to truly commit his life to the Oromo cause. So in 1991, when the Oromo Liberation Front entered the transitional government of Ethiopia, he joined Hawwisoo Caffee Gada, a politically conscious Oromo music group that was participating in the Oromo national movement; he eventually emerged as an outstanding revolutionary musical artist. Famously known for his first song “Bilisumaaf immimman ija koo walmaraa,” which means for freedom, tears will flow from my eyes, and another song entitled “Abbaa Joffee,” Usmayyoo performed on stages in Dardar, Qobbo, Calaanqo, Qullubi, Watar, Baddanno, Burqaa, Dirree-Dhawa, Harawaaca, Jerjertu, Jaaja, Masalaa, Odaa-Bultuum, Baddeeysa, Galamso, Balballeysi, Machaara, Micata, Hardim, Bubbee, Dhumuga, and Darbaa-Kuulo. Consequently, he became both very famous and very much loved by the Oromo people. Along with his meaningful music, his kindness, his sincere friendliness and generosity, his selfless support for others who were facing problems, and his capacity to simply make people smile and laugh made him a beloved and respected artist.<sup>vi</sup>

But in 1992, when the OLF was ejected by the Tigrayan’s People Liberation Front (TPLF) from the transitional government, the government sent soldiers to attack and murder Usmayyoo. At a place called Burunqe near the town of Jaajati, Usmayyoo was shot in the leg; fortunately, he survived the attempted assassination. Oromo farmers hid Usmayyoo in a secret place and provided him with medical aid and support. But as soon as he healed, Usmayyoo went to Finfinnee and joined Bandi Bilisumma, another music group that was committed to the Oromo struggle; he was one not to be deterred from fighting for his people.<sup>vii</sup>

In one of his songs, Usmayyoo displays this determination:

**Sodaa lubbu tiiya jedhee,  
biyaa be’ee  
garba che’ee  
hin jiradhuu  
kan bir tahee  
biyya fi biyye toraatin  
sabaa fi adaa koo keeysati  
haqqa falmachun naa murti.**

*From the fear of death, I will not run away from my country to become a refugee. I must fight for the rights and freedom of my people with my people in my country, whatever the costs.*

Yet, this bravery to express his support and love for his people made Usmayyoo only a larger target of the Tigray government led by Meles Zenawi. He was soon without any justifiable

reason imprisoned by Zenawi's regime in 1998. In an underground prison cell, Usmayyoo was isolated from other prisoners because of his attempts to communicate with them. He was chained at his hands and legs, and tortured for eight years.<sup>viii</sup>

Here is an excerpt from one of his songs that can be interpreted in many ways, but I think parallels his imprisonment:

**Dukkana bara dheera  
Naa rakke jireenya koo maraa  
Sayoom  
Sayoom  
Naa bariiteetin hunda arka  
Dukkanrra ifaa ba'uu kulka**

**Ummamaan naan orkanne agartu  
Huundataan dawwatee adda naa baaftu**

**Maaltu guyya koo gadii fageeyse?  
Qananiin fiira ana dhagabse  
Maaluman yakke  
ifa na orke**

**yaa rabi  
gaari narra jirjiri  
naaf dhi'eesi barii**

Which translates into:

*Why have I been put in the darkness for forever? For many years of my life, I have suffered in this darkness. When, oh when will I be able to see? What has made my days empty? What has robbed me of life? What did I do to deserve this? Oh God, help me, please show me a brighter day.*

Regardless of all the mistreatment and brutal torture he received, comrades of Usmayyoo assert that he never bowed down to his enemies.<sup>ix</sup>

During this traumatic eight year confinement, Usmayyoo's wife, Faxumaa Mohammed, was travelling between Dire-Dhawa and Finfinne trying to support her husband while struggling to raise their three children. She was a revolutionary woman who unflinchingly stood beside her husband for the Oromo cause. But unfortunately, the excess of stress and mental and physical anguish that Faxumaa endured in addition to other circumstances of which we do not know led to her very untimely death; she died before Usmayyoo's release from prison.<sup>x</sup> Usmayyoo sings for her in the following song:

**Waa'eella too takka  
Haati maatii waati  
Naaf osoo fiigtu ti  
Abde lubbu siitii**

**Rabbi araaramiif  
Isii naa raamatii  
hadha abba goote  
yaatima kan kootif.**

*My closest friend, the mother of my child, and the protector of our home lost her life while running for me. God please put mercy on her soul; she was the provider of fatherless children.*

Usmayyoo was released from jail relatively quite recently, 2006, after which he released a new collection of songs. One of songs says the following:

**Yaa rabii, galaani kee kumma kumma  
Arrafi Borrulee abdin kiiya sumaa**

**Dukkana hunquftu  
Namni itti na darbe  
Sii na baase keeyisa  
Fedhin teeti dhibbe**

*Thank you God a thousand times. You are my hope today and tomorrow.  
Some one threw me into an endless darkness. But You, God, took me out.*

But due to the brutal mental and physical torture that he received, the lack of adequate medical care and food, and the other modes of suffering that Tigrayan authorities made Usmayyoo endure, Usmayyoo's health heavily deteriorated. Consequently, he died soon after his release in the month of March, 2006.<sup>xi</sup> Many individuals speculate that Tigrayan agents poison prominent Oromo nationalists while they are in prison. So as soon as their death is close-by, they are released. It is very likely that this happened in Usmayyoo's case.

Now, I would like to turn my discussion to Ebbisa Addunya. Ebbisa was born in Dembi Dollo, southwest of the Western Wallaga region of Oromia. With two younger brothers and three sisters, Ebbisa was the eldest son in his family. He was a very talented and respected young person. He attended Oliiqaa Dingil Primary School, Qellem High School, and then passed the national examination for Higher Education to attend a university.<sup>xiii</sup>

In 1991, while waiting for admission to an university, the military regime of Ethiopia was overthrown by OLF, TPLF, and EPLF forces. In Ebbisa's hometown of Dembi Dollo, OLF forces had set up a strong military base. At that time, Ebbisa was very aware of the deteriorating Oromo condition and the need for self-determination for the Oromo people; hence, to support the Oromo struggle for national determination, he joined the OLF. He was trained to be a cadre (Dabballee), and being exceptional at that, he became a Dabballee/cadre trainer in the Dembi Dollo OLF military camp.<sup>xiii</sup>

But beyond his abilities within the military, Ebbisa was also musically talented; he played many instruments and was a gifted vocalist. Because of this, he joined the OLF music band and played a significant role in pushing forth Oromo culture, music, and identity.<sup>xiv</sup> In one song that he sang about his mother and joining the OLF, he said the following:

**Haati dhiira boosee**  
**Laffaa gangalatee**  
**Mucaan koo hin du'ammu**  
**Jaalalaa dhageeyse**

**Hin booyin ayyo koo**  
**An diina warranaa**  
**Duddubatti hin hafnu**  
**Waliin waajin kaana**

Which translates into:

*As my mother cried, she fell to the floor and asked, "Will my child survive?" I said, "Yes, I will survive; you're going to hear good news about me."  
 Don't cry mother. I am leaving you to fight the enemy. We cannot remain behind. Let us stand together.*

Throughout 1991 and 1992, Ebbisa travelled through various regions within Oromia (the south, southwest, center, and western) to perform and sing<sup>xv</sup>; his songs were not only cultural, but they were revolutionary. They were songs that strongly emphasized the sufferings of the Oromo people and ways through which the Oromo people should demand justice. In one of his songs, Ebbisa sings the following:

**Ana falmataa Gadaa**  
**Bonsa sirna Abba Gadaa**  
**Yoo Oromo tokko te'ee**  
**Diina saa baqqee badaa**

**Olaan kee bilisoommte  
Alaabaa shee dhabbaatte  
Atiis mirkandheeyfachu  
Akkamiti daggatte?**

Which means:

*I am the defender of Gadaa, I am proud of Gadaa; If Oromos are united, their enemies will be defeated. Your neighbors are liberated, they have raised their flag. Why have you failed to achieve liberation as well?*

On a personal level, Ebbisa was a very kind person; he truly loved and cared for the Oromo people. He provided his assistance and care to individuals, his relatives, his sisters, brothers, etc. to anyone who needed help or were having troubles. Ebbisa was a very popular, well-admired, nationalist musical artist.<sup>xvi</sup>

Ebbisa was also known to be a very brave individual. Even after the OLF went underground and its leaders were banished from the country, he continued to sing about the criminal activities that the Ethiopian government was heavily engaging in. He was extremely fearless, daring, and publically vocal about the Ethiopian regime's terrorist tactics against the Oromo people and continued to also support the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA).<sup>xvii</sup> The following song was one that he openly sang after OLF was ejected from the transitional government:

**Nuti hinbitamnu, alaagadhaani  
Nuti Oromodhaa, haa nuu beekani  
Arraabaan soobaa, nun gabroomsanii  
Lammuu arraabaan, nun goowoosanii.**

**Arrabaan nu sobaa  
Afaan qawwetiini  
Meeqaa kan gurramee  
Mana hidhaa itii**

**Badii tokkoo malee  
Hanka du'aati  
Meeqaa kan qalame  
Qee isarratti.**

*We will not be ruled by our enemies. We are Oromos, let them know this. With their lies, they cannot deceive us and enslave us, they cannot manipulate us. At gunpoint, how many people have been thrown into jail by our enemies? Without doing anything, Oromos have been massacred even in their own homes.*

But because Ebbisa was so courageous, so openly vocal about the murders and injustices that the Ethiopian government was committing, he himself became a large target of the Ethiopian government. According to the Oromia Support Group Press Release No 17, a 26 year-old Oromo who was a friend of Ebbisa and who was helping him by transporting him to performances recognized clearly that Ebbisa was under government surveillance and was being monitored by government agents.<sup>xviii</sup> On August 30th, 1996, Ebbisa Addunya was assassinated in his own home by Ethiopian government security agents in Finfinne. The following is an account from the Oromia Support Group Press Release No 14 in October 1996:

Oromo nationalist singer Ebbisa Addunya and his friend Tana Wayessa were shot dead by government gunmen on August 30th [1996]. They were at Ebbisa's home in the Shiromeda area, No 094, Higher 13, Kebele 01, north of the American Embassy in Addis Ababa, when gunmen burst in. Eyewitnesses claim the bodies were dragged from the house and put in a Land Rover with a government license plate. The security men who carried out the murders first cleared the street. Residents who looked out of their houses after the gunfire were told to get back indoors. The bodies were recovered [the] next day from the morgue at Menelik II hospital.<sup>xix</sup>

But even after Ebbisa was murdered, Ebbisa's family became a target as well; they were repeatedly mistreated in the hands of OPDO security agents in Dembi Dollo due to their relation to Ebbisa. His brother Ashanafi has been repeatedly imprisoned by Wayyene and OPDO agents.<sup>xx</sup>

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

It is not a secret here that Tigrayan authorities and Meles Zenawi are using today several mechanisms to eliminate Oromo revolutionary leaders and cultural icons like Usmayyoo Muussa and Ebbisa Addunya who were revolutionizing Oromo cultural identity, personhood, and nationhood. What Usmayyoo and Ebbisa musically articulated and passionately wanted to promote was exactly what the Ethiopian government wanted to and still wants to forestall: the building of Oromummaa (Oromo identity, culture, and nationalism) and Oromo political consciousness amongst the majority ethnonational group within the Ethiopian Empire, the Oromo people.

Generally, revolutionary Oromo artists within the Ethiopian Empire have been specifically targeted for several reasons. The first is that with their natural talents and creativity, they were and are retrieving Oromo cultural and political memories—memories that the

Ethiopian Empire prefers to omit from history. Second, they were effectively capturing in a simple and understandable form the extensive suffering of the Oromo people under successive Ethiopian regimes. By this, they were also motivating the Oromo people to liberate themselves by armed struggle and by joining the OLF. Lastly, they were revealing to the Oromo people the true essence of Oromumma, bilisumma (or freedom), and walabummaa (or independence) in revolutionary, inspiring ways. All of these effects of their music are threatening to the dictatorial regime of Ethiopia, and that is why these artists were targeted and assassinated. But nevertheless, these Oromo musical nationalists have left an unforgettable imprint on the Oromo national struggle for liberation and sovereignty. And I hope that we not only remember this for ourselves, but that we find ways of communicating this with others or making others aware of Oromo history, the Oromo struggle, and the brutal crimes that the Ethiopian government is committing against the Oromo people.

#### Sources

<sup>1</sup> OSG Press Release 36. <<http://www.oromo.org/osg/pr36.htm>>.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> Yaya, Bakkalcha. Interview.

<sup>1</sup> Maati, Daraaraa. "Yaadannoo Artist Usmayyoo Muusaa!" Burqaa.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> Oborra, Caalaa. Interview.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> Maati, Daraaraa. "Yaadannoo Artist Usmayyoo Muusaa!" Burqaa.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> Kitte, Dereesa. Interview.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> Oromo Support Group Press Release. No. 17, May/June 1997.

<<http://oromo.org/osg/pr170697.htm>>.

<sup>1</sup> Oromo Support Group Press Release. No. 14, October/November 1996.

<<http://www.oromo.org/osg/pr141197.htm>>.

<sup>1</sup> Kitte, Dereesa. Interview.

#### Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank Tamam Yousuf for his guidance and assistance in gathering sources for this paper.



## **LACK OF PRESS FREEDOM IN ETHIOPIA IN GENERAL AND OROMIA IN PARTICULAR**

**Aregash M. Dheressa**

The former Berisa Newspaper reporter

### **1. Introduction**

In the process of the formation of the present state of Ethiopia, Abyssinia invaded and colonized Oromia (Holcomb & Ibsa, 1990). In the process of colonization and pacification, the population of the Oromo people was reduced by more than half (De Selviac, 1900). Some of them were killed or sold into slavery (Bulcha, 2002) the many died from famine and several epidemics (Dugassa, 2008). The rest were became serfs to the Abyssinian institutions (church & crown) and Abyssinian individuals (Leta, ).

After Oromia lost its sovereignty, the Oromo people were denied the right to decide on their social, economic, political and cultural affairs. For example, the Ethiopian government denied the right of the Oromo people to educate their children in their mother tongue (Bulcha, ) and banned the development of Oromo written literature (Bulcha; Hassan ). The Ethiopian language policy, which denies the rights of the Oromo people to know, affected public health conditions in Oromia (Dugassa, 2006). To date, however, little has been written whether or not the Ethiopian government allows the development of a free press in Oromia. In the knowledge of the author no paper has examined the impacts of the denial of a free press on the socio-economic development of Oromia.

### **What is Freedom of the Press?**

When the issue of freedom of press becomes the topic of discussion, the questions that usually follow are: what is the freedom of press? Why is freedom press needed? Why does the Ethiopian government suppress the free press? Is the magnitude of the suppression of free press the same all over the Ethiopian empire or harsher in Oromia? If the Ethiopian government press policies are harsher in Oromia, why are they harsher toward the Oromo media? What are the impacts of such policies on the social, economic and cultural development of the Oromo people?

To understand the impacts of the absence of press freedom in Oromia, it is important to examine the status of the free press in Oromia in the past. What was the status of the Oromo media in pre-colonial times, and how can we accurately reflect on the presence or absence of a

free press in Oromia when there was no written literature. What about the status of press freedom in Abyssinia in the past,

This paper has three major objectives. The first objective is to raise awareness about the ways that Ethiopian government policies suppress freedom of the press in Oromia. The second objective is to highlight the attitude of Abyssinian journalists in reporting issues that are relevant to the Oromo people and to see if it parallels the longstanding Abyssinian racist attitude toward the Oromo people. The third objective is to suggest the ways that the denial of freedom of press has impacted on the Oromo people.

### **Definitions**

Freedom of the press is the freedom to communicate and express oneself. The concept of freedom of press implies the absence of interference from an overreaching [state](#). Freedom of the press consists of constitutional or statutory protections pertaining to the media and published materials. For example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which was used for the formation of United Nations and to which Ethiopia is a part, clearly recognizes freedom of expression (see UDHR). The UDHR states: *"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference, and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers"*

The concept of the press is a broad term and it includes all systems that make information available to people. This could include newspapers, television, radio, books, lectures, movies, art, dance, telephone, cassettes, CDs, videocassettes, magazines, electronic bulletin boards, computer networks and videotapes. In many countries, freedom of the press is part of constitutional rights and it is something guaranteed. Free press is used as tool to inform and educate and make the government accountable to the people. The press is used to inform and empower the people as well as forcing democratic government to function. Free presses inform the society and create opportunities for people to chose in life and live in liberty. Thomas Jefferson explained the importance of a free press when he said:

The basis of our government being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate for a moment to prefer the latter.

Although individuals elected by people like Thomas Jefferson promote a free press, for dictators a free press is a nightmare. For example, Napoleon clearly stated his fear of a free press when he said: `I fear three newspapers more than a hundred thousand bayonets.

This paper closely looks into the lack of press freedoms in Ethiopia in general and Oromia in particular. I argue that the lack of press freedom in Ethiopia shows the extent to which the people are denied the right to know. The absence of press freedoms prevents the media from informing and educating the public and playing its role in socio- economic, political and human rights developments. In this paper, I discuss the situation of the free press in Ethiopia. I also bring into light whether or not the Ethiopian government suppresses the free media and examine the reasons why the Ethiopian government harshly suppresses in Oromia. I also look into the impacts of the denial of freedom of the press in Oromia and suggest what should be done to make the voice of the Oromo people heard.

In Oromia, lack of freedom of the press felt in print, radio, TV and the Internet. Given that I have a long experience in the area of printing I will emphasize in this aspect.

### **Freedom of Press in Oromia Pre-colonial Time**

Oromos are egalitarian<sup>1</sup> society. The traditional Oromo social and political philosophy promotes the view that all people are equal and should be treated as equals and have the same political, economic, social and cultural rights. In the past, the Oromo social philosophy does not allow social and economic inequalities. For example, the Oromo Gada leadership is elected by the people. Given that the people elect the Gada leaders, there is no need to fear the opinion of people. Indeed the oral history of the Oromo people suggests that under Gada rule, there was no restriction in the expression of opinions. On many occasions, the Oromo people came together and express of their hopes, frustrations and share their successes in the form of songs known as Gerarsaa. Women challenge male domination through songs. Not only that, Oromo women approves or disapproves of the Gada leaders through their songs. In fact, an Oromo saying goes ``dubbii baha hindhowwani, galma dhowwu malee`` which can be translated as there is no need to restrict to expression of opinions but challenging the validity of the opinion suggests that freedom of expression is one of the basic rights that are guaranteed. If the Oromo people's social

transformation had not been subverted by Abyssinian colonialism, they would have allowed freedom of the press to flourish. In Abyssinia things are totally different.

Abyssinians are patriarchal society and they have developed a centralized highrarchial system of government where the kings and queens make all the major decisions. For centuries, Abyssinians have been ruled under kings, queens and cruel warlords. In order to maintain their power the Abyssinian kings and queens have restricted freedom of expression. The Abyssinian literature known as Semina Qinee (Wax and Gold) probably has developed from the suppression of expression. In the case of Wax and Gold literature Abyssinians can express themselves about those who are in power only in secret codes. This suggests that suppression of expression is deeply rooted in their culture and it is most unlikely that in Abyssinian press freedoms will flourish in the near future.

### **The Importance of a Free Press**

UNESCO promotes freedom of the press. According to this renowned world institution a free press is not a luxury that can wait for better times. Indeed a free press has been seen as part of the very process that can bring about change and a better future. From the perspective of UNESCO, freedom of the press is seen not as views solely expressed by journalists when they report and comment. Instead it has been seen as the public's right of access to knowledge and information (UNESCO, 2006).

In education, it is known that communication between teachers and students facilitate knowledge construction in the same way that a free press acts as a catalyst for the development of civil society and enables all members of society to exchange their views, to identify their own problems and find solutions to their social, economic and political problems. Press freedoms are instrumental to express society's needs, hopes, aspirations and frustrations and as such it can play a crucial role in building consensus between rival communities and help to stabilize societies. Therefore, a free press is crucial to the democratization of society and facilitates the transparency of decision-making and it is an essential condition in the social transformation of society.

### **Ethiopian Press Law Vs Press Freedom**

As a journalist, I got a chance to participate and to report on the first two debates of the draft law in 2003. Owners and journalists from private media, government journalists, public relations working in government and non-governmental organizations and representatives of advertising agencies participated in these debates. My self and other concerned participants raised questions and concerns on the articles in the draft law that needed to be revised. As a participant, and reading the draft of the press law, it was very clear to me that the Ethiopian press law was designed to control freedom of the press. The draft paper for the press law was one of the longest debated issues in Ethiopian law. From the beginning, the draft law was not prepared by the stakeholders or experts in media. There was no article in the draft that was not controversial at the time of the discussion. Most of the provisions in the draft were against the very existence of an independent press in the country. Therefore, it drew opposition from all corners of the press such as private press journalists and journalists of the government owned media. All those who understand the importance of the media promoted and supported the flourishing of an independent and free press.

This draft law was prepared by the so-called " Press Counsel" which was part of the Ministry of Information of Ethiopia. The purpose of the draft paper was, therefore, not to promote the free press but to pave the way for the ruling party's political objectives to be enacted without public scrutiny. For example, the Freedom House criticized the Ethiopian press law on several articles of the law. The Freedom house criticized the law:

A 2003 draft press law, which has been widely criticized by the private press and by press freedom groups, remained under consideration in 2006, although certain provisions of the law were included in the new penal code that took effect in May 2005. Issues of concern include restrictions on who may practice journalism; government-controlled licensing and registration systems; restrictions on print and broadcast cross-ownership; harsh sanctions for violations of the law, including up to five years' imprisonment; excessively broad exceptions to the right of access to information held by public authorities; and the establishment of a government-controlled press council with powers to engage in prior censorship.

[http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/press\\_release/ethiopia FTP\\_07.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/press_release/ethiopia FTP_07.pdf)

## **Lack of Freedom of Expression in the Press Media in Oromia**

The absence of freedom of the press in Ethiopia has particularly targeted Oromo journalists more than others. The Ethiopian government has made great efforts to suppress the Oromo people culturally, socially, politically and economically and any press agency that reveals this truth is subjected to harassment, illegal detention and torture of staffs and the closure of the press establishment. In fact, these are a long-standing policies of the Ethiopian government. For example, the first Oromo print media started in the late 1970s. However, from its inception, the military government harshly treated the Oromo printing press. Finally, the Dergue regime eliminated the Oromo private press barely a year after it started. Berisa is the first independent Oromo newspapers, which pioneered discussing the Oromo social, economic and cultural issues in *Afaan Oromo*. Some of the staff of Berisa were tortured and imprisoned and some of them were forced to leave the country, while the rest were forced to work for the government propaganda.

Kuwe Kumsa is one of the first Oromo journalists among the many who became the victims of press law in Ethiopia. Kumsa, who is now a university professor in Canada, experienced a lengthy detention without charge under the military government. In prison, she has experienced torture. One author described her experience thus:

Martha Kumsa, also known as Kuwee Kumsa, is Oromo born and raised in Ethiopia. She worked as a journalist in the second half of the 1970s, producing and broadcasting Oromo radio programs and editing the Women's Column for the Oromo weekly, Bariisa. She was thrown into jail and tortured by the military regime in January 1980. She stayed incarcerated without charge or trial for ten years. <http://www.yorku.ca/mam/marthakumsa.html>

She was released in 1989 from the prison because of the successful campaign of Amnesty International and PEN International. She went to Canada in 1991 under the Canadian Government's Women at Risk Program.

After the military government was overthrown in 1991, a coalition of the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Fronts (EPRDF), the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF), the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and other major political organizations formed a coalition government which lasted only for a year. During this time, a number of independent presses

came into being. The EPRDF party realized that under free, fair elections and a free press, the minority ruling party could easily lose the power, and thus they decided to resort to force.

The OLF members and supporters were immediately labeled as terrorists and all independent press critical of the government policies were either banned or their staff accused of fabricated crimes and put behind bars, killed, or forcefully disappeared. This being the general situation of the press in Ethiopia since 1991/92, the Oromo based press is even more suppressed than the other press establishments focusing on local issues of other ethnic groups. The Amhara owned print press is relatively tolerated and still exists although it is under harassment.

For example, Urji, an Oromo weekly newspaper which, despite the heavy handed government actions managed to survive until 1996, was finally closed down and most of the editorial staff including Tesfaye Deressa and Garoma Bekele, were kept prisoners of conscience for so long until they finally were released under pressure from international humanitarian and press organizations. They later escaped and became refugees.

Seife Nebelbal is another Oromo weekly newspaper that circulated for a while after Urji was forced out of business. Amnesty International worried about the harassment that journalists were facing as it says,

Independent journalists continued to face harassment and arrest. At least 13 newspapers shut down by the government in 2005 were still closed. Independent journalists were reportedly denied licenses to operate, although others did receive licenses.

<http://thereport.amnesty.org/en/regions/africa/ethiopia>

The Ethiopian government closed down many of the private presses and harshly treated the journalists. As a result most of them left the country as refugees, to the neighboring countries or ended up in detention. After the Urji and Seife Nebelbal newspapers went out of business, the government started harassing the Oromo journalists who were employed by the state complying with state controlled press directives. For Oromo journalists it was not good enough to comply with the state controlled press. They were forced to participate in the state propaganda campaign against the Oromo people and their interests. Those Oromo journalists who worked for the government press who were reluctant to do this were either dismissed from their jobs or indefinitely put in prison. The Oromo language TV reporters Dhabasa Waqjira, Shiferaw

Insermu and other victims were released after a long detention with no charge. Dhabasa's wife, Lalise Wadajo, also a TV employee, is still in detention without charge.

In the Ethiopian government owned media, Oromo journalists are facing three major problems. First, the budget allocated to run the Oromo language programs are insignificant compared to the Amharic or Tigrigna programs. Second, the Oromo journalists are not allowed to freely move about and gather information and bring issues to the public. If Oromo journalists make an effort to exercise the duties of their profession and report facts they observe, they would be labeled as OLF members or supporters. Oromo journalists are denied the right to contribute their part to inform their society on issues that are relevant to the public. Oromo journalists are forced to run the state propaganda. The Ethiopian government wants them, for its own use to present itself as if various ethnic groups in the empire have equal rights or a free press is exercised in different languages. Third, Oromo journalists are not getting an equal opportunity for training or education. They are denied the opportunity to travel, collect information and report on occasional state visits. They are told to translate the news or programs produced by party royals who frame issues from the perspective of the political party or ethnic group in power. Oromo journalists are denied promotions and rewards in their position. Given that government security forces follow their activities they are constantly worried about being demoted or laid off without compensation at any time.

Credibility and trust are intertwined. The Oromo people have no trust in the Ethiopian government and state media. Lack of credibility among the public is one of the major problems that the state media faces. The Ethiopian government media is preoccupied more with disseminating propaganda rather than with burning social issues. The Ethiopian government media give more coverage to what the Prime Minister has said in a meeting or where he has visited than to social, economic, political and environmental problems the public is facing. Given that the state media has no credibility the people have no interest in buying and reading the government newspapers. For example, Berisa newspaper that is in circulation for over four decades weekly prints about 2000 copies. However, Urji News paper that has stayed in circulation for few years started with 4000 copies and within three years reached over 15,000 copies.



It is true that a media that is preoccupied in propagating government policies cannot attract public attention or interest. Telling the public that the government has respect for human rights while in fact people are imprisoned, tortured and killed without justifiable reasons and due process of law, makes people mistrust the media. Disseminating government propaganda about food self-sufficiency while millions of people are starving to death, and silence of the media when food donated from international humanitarian organizations is diverted to feed the military and security forces, is contrary the ethics of journalism. In addition, reporting on the expansion of health care services while in fact people are dying of simple preventable diseases is not in the normal realm of journalism. For journalists with higher moral caliber, this is a challenge to their integrity and even to their identity.

Although the Ethiopian government controlled media is not credible, it is still better than not having any media at all. Sorting out the truth from simple propaganda requires a trained mind. The Oromo people need to get news about science and technology and social economic developments in other parts of the world. The Oromo people need to make effort to have access to media in general and a free press in particular. No matter what, it is better to have media no matter what the objective of the media is than having no media. In information age keeping societies away from information is no less than killing. Therefore, it is necessary at this stage for the Oromo people to give every support to the Oromo media. Journalists need to use whatever opportunities are available to them for the future improvement as they gradually become independent.

Although the Oromo people are not interested in reading the Ethiopian government newspapers there are several reasons why they still buy them. The Ethiopian government, forces people to buy newspaper, because the courts and other government institutions don't accept advertisements if they are not published by government owned media. For legal purposes many people are forced to publish their advertisements on state owned newspapers and obligated to buy and keep the newspaper as a document. However, they don't always have the means to acquire them. For example, Berissa, the only Afaan Oromo language newspaper, has major distribution problem. Every week, 75% of the published newspapers are deliberately returned to storage while people are still looking to buy them.

### **Double Standards**

The Ethiopian government fully owns two newspapers published in foreign languages (the Ethiopian Herald- in English and Al-Alem in Arabic). The newspapers published in a foreign language are treated very differently compared to any government owned newspapers published in that country. These newspapers are targeting foreigners, diplomats, Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) and others. Given that the Herald and Al-Alem newspapers target foreign diplomats and international organizations in its news coverage and analyses, it is more balanced. Indeed the Ethiopian government considers these newspapers as its diplomats and uses them to attract foreign investments and advertises in them to sell Oromo land to investors and attracts NGOs. As it is visibly seen, now days many Oromos are losing their land because the Ethiopian government is advertising and selling them to investors. One can judge the impacts of the absence of press freedoms on the speed in which the Ethiopian government sales land after the Oromo people are evicted from their homes and became homelessness and landless.

### **Lack of Concern and Attention to Oromo Issues by other Journalists**

Oromia is the largest, most populous, naturally fertile and rich in mineral resources than any other region in Ethiopia. It has untapped natural resources for development. However, the resources of Oromia have been mismanaged and purposely destroyed by the Ethiopian government. For example, the unplanned resettlement program in which the Derg regime settled Abyssinians in Oromia has caused environmental degradation and displacement of the Oromo people. The TPLF-EPRDF is following in the footsteps of the Dergi and has brought the same disaster through the resettlement program.

Oromo journalists raised this concern to the Oromia regional state and asked that it to reconsider the resettlement policy which has dire consequences to the environment, public health and on the people who were already poor and have no social services. As is usually happens, non-Oromo journalists have shown no interest in these issues. Many Abyssinian journalists choose not to cover issues that are relevant to the Oromo people. If they cover them they do it from the perspective of the Ethiopian government or from the Amahara Tigray ethnic perspective. No matter how many thousands of children and women died of malaria the Ethiopian government media and Abyssinian privately owned media choose to ignore it as if it is not there. Although there is a lack of necessary social services, the Ethiopian government media over exaggerates the

little services they give. They report the services that international organizations provide, as they were government services. The writer of this paper and other Oromo journalists brought their concerns on this issue before and after the implementation of the policy.

As a journalist who worked on the Berisa newspaper, I interviewed the head of the resettlement project office in Oromia about concerns regarding the implications of the resettlement program on the environment, natural resources and the availability of social services like health institutions and education and so on. While the Oromo media looked at the issue from the perspective of the environment and public health the Ethiopian government saw it from the perspective controlling the Oromo people. The Oromo journalists informed the Ethiopian government to rethink about the importance and consequences of the resettlement policy. The government resettled people before giving them any orientation about how they can play their part in preventing deforestation and protecting natural resources in their new place so that green areas can be saved from becoming dry areas. It didn't take long before we started to hear people were exposed to malaria and other transmitted sickness and even dying since they had been resettled in the bush where there are no any health and social services.

In democratic countries the media is used to analyse the impacts of social policies and projects. For example, media science promotes using developmental journalism to benefit the larger public by discussing government policies and projects before they are implemented. In doing so the media is used to raise awareness about the costs and benefits of certain projects and policies:

The term developmental journalism attempts to document the condition within a country so that the larger world can understand them. Journalists are encouraged to travel to remote areas, interact with the citizens of the country, and report back. This type of development also looks at proposed government projects to improve conditions in the country, and analyzes whether or not they will be effective. Ultimately, the journalist may come with proposed solutions and actions in the piece, suggesting ways in which they might be implemented. Often, this type of development journalism encourages a cooperative effort between citizens of the nation and the outside world.

<http://www.wisegeek.com/what-isdevelopment-journalism.htm> 19/11/2009

The Abyssinian media, whether private or government, have always ignored the issues that are relevant to the Oromo people even when they attract the attention of the international media. For example, Al Jazeera TV in 2009 was quoted as reporting the following:

A scientific study has found heavy metals, which are said to severely impair water quality, in samples taken from Lake Koka and adjacent factories - confirming the source of pollution. A February 2009 documentary titled *Green Lake* by Al Jazeera Television showed how residents were left hopeless and helpless by local and federal government authorities in Ethiopia. Primarily of the Oromo nation, these residents have experienced deadly health impacts from the contaminated Lake Koka, such as diarrhea, typhoid, skin blisters, gastroenteritis, urinary tract infection and liver disease.” <http://www.gadaa.com/LakeKoka.html>

There are a number of such issues that are ignored by mainstream Ethiopia government media. The author of this paper made an effort to report on Berisa about the environmental pollution and health consequences to the people living around the Abyataa Shala Park area that was subject to deforestation and ill-designed industrial projects running at the Abbyata Lake. This writer has witnessed and reported in Berisa newspaper about the government sponsored soda ash production. Abyata Lake, previously known as the deepest lake in Africa was allowed to be drained to facilitate the production of soda ash<sup>1</sup>. The chemical residues of the factory were also dumped into the lake thus killing its natural ecosystem.

For example, on a field trip to national park, I had interviewed an expert who was in charge of the park and the manager and the owner of the soda ash factory and made an effort to report the impact of the factory on the park and the lake in Addis Zemen Newspaper and in Berisa. In my interview with the expert in charge of the park, I have learned the impact of the factory on the park; to cover the other side of the story, I decided to interview the owner and the manager of the factory. The owner of the factory first denied me the right to visit the factory’s premises and refused to give any interview. When he realized that I already know the opinions of the experts he decided to give the interview. From the interview it was very clear that the environmental impact of the factory was enormous and it was well known to the owner of the factory.

I succeeded in publishing the report in the Berisa newspaper but not in the Addis Zemen. In the report I revealed that 80-90 percent of the soda-ash was harvested from the lake by evaporating the salty water. The residues of the chemicals used in harvesting the soda-ash were dumped back into the lake. The chemical residues killed fish and other inhabitants of the lake and threatened the food security of people in the area. Also I interviewed workers of the factory and they complained that they didn’t get enough salary and even they complained that their health was badly affected by the chemicals used in the production.

After my report was published in Berisa, other Abyssinian journalists interviewed the owner and manager of the company and reported in Addis Zemen. The report in Addis Zemen reveals the benefit that the company made to the national economy without mentioning the economic and environmental impacts of the factory. The difference between the two reports was that the first was written from the perspective of the Oromo people and concern for the environment and the other was from the Abyssinian and short-term benefits. I bring up this issue to show the realities of media in Ethiopia.

The longstanding problem with Abyssinian journalists is that they do not care what happens to the Oromo people. Berisa reported what was going on in the name of industrial development in this area, including the toxic effects of the industrial wastes. However, the Addis Zemen, the Amharic daily newspaper reported only the contribution of the factory to the country's economic development.

The Abyssinian media always report on matters that benefit their state, institution and companies. If they decide to report, they either distort the facts or give a confusing account. This is a clear indication of the situation of the media under the regime. The reports are not balanced. It goes along ethno-national interests. The Abyssinian reporters express account based ethnicity and longstanding negative attitudes toward the Oromo people. These reporters are motivated by political and economic benefits and prejudice rather than the realities, which are the professional duties of journalism.

Although there is no fully-fledged press freedom in most African countries, there are only a few countries like Ethiopia where the profession is compromised and individual reporters are blinded by ethnic feelings and partisanship in abusing the ethics of journalism.

In neighboring country like Kenya, the stage of development of the press and the improvements in the rights and freedom of journalists is tremendous. Criticizing government malpractices in Ethiopia is considered a crime whereas in Kenya it is a right that journalists enjoy as they do their daily professional activity. The major newspapers and TV networks are privately owned and are not monitored by the government. Those media groups which are suspected of having close relations with the authorities are not taken as favorites by the public.

Journalists working in private media earn good salaries when compared with those working in government owned media. The circulation of private newspapers is also high. For example, Nation Media Group, the most known media group which operates Nation TV and Nation News paper (which has a daily circulation of 184,000). According to one

institution that monitors the status of media, in Kenya most journalists can freely negotiate their pay. While the annual gross national per capital income in Kenya is around 360 dollar, most journalists earn well above that per month. However, there is quite a disparity between journalists employed by the government and those working in the private media. Those who are working in private media earn far more better than those journalists in the government controlled media”  
<http://www.pressreference.com/Gu-Ku/Kenya.html> 08.12.2009

### **Lack of Professional Training in Journalism**

There are a few trained journalists in Ethiopia. Most of the journalists work either by experience or by their interest in the field. Until the Ethiopian Mass Media Training Institute was established in 1998, there were no institutions that gave training in journalism. Journalism was offered as a single course for students of literature at Addis Ababa University. Due to unfair and harsh treatment by the Ethiopian government security forces, independent minded journalists would not stay long in their position and looked for other opportunities elsewhere. This reality caused the Ethiopia media to be run by either individuals who had no tertiary education other than accumulated experience, interested and had not many options other than the media. Few who have the education remain in the system and those who do not enjoy freedom of press. Mostly they are forced to promote government policy.

A number of people have earned their diploma or first degree since the Institute opened its doors. However, it is still questionable if the Ethiopian Media Training Institute, which is now incorporated with the Addis Ababa University since 2005, has produced qualified journalists. The instructors come from different universities and colleges in the city to give others social science courses in the area of their specialization. But there were obvious problems among those who teach journalism. They usually come from different media organizations. Most of these trainers themselves were not well trained in journalism. As a student of this training institute, the writer has witnessed the fact that there were teachers who were supposed to train students in English but did not speak the English language themselves, although the medium of instruction in that college was English. Some of the teachers gave lectures in Amaharic. Here I am not implying whether or not English is better suited as a medium of instruction. However, given that a free press and journalism is a foreign concept for Abyssinia, if the teachers do not have the skill to read a foreign language how can he/she can teach journalism?

### **Lack of Exposure and Training Abroad**

The Ethiopian government gives opportunities and chances of training abroad to the ruling party- ethnic loyal journalists. Oromo journalists are always suspected and they are not allowed to go out of the country to report events or for training purposes.

### **Lack of Professional Organization**

Journalism is a profession that requires university training and continuous professional upgrading. In many parts of the world, journalists are organized to maintain high standards in the profession through peer review. However there is no strong journalist association in Ethiopia, which could strengthen the profession and fight for the right of journalists, especially for Oromo journalists who have been denied their rights for decades. As it is the case for civic and political organizations, Oromo journalists didn't get a chance to form any professional associations because every organization with the name of Oromo is always categorized as an anti-government organization. The absence of an Oromo journalists association made it impossible for members to voice their concerns, struggle for their rights, enhance professional training and forge alliances with international colleagues.

### **Challenges of Oromo Journalists in Diaspora**

Oromo journalists who took refuge in neighboring countries and the western world face several challenges. First, they lack resources needed have connections and to work together with others to expose the regime that has forced them to flee. Second, they are resettled in different countries and in different regions within a country. Others pursue other fields of study and leave the profession altogether even though they might resettle in a country where they can express their opinions freely. They also lack of the opportunity/ competence to exercise their profession and they are forced to focus on other personal matters. Most of the Oromo journalists are not in a position to continue their education in the field and upgrade their skill in journalism.

Due to the lack of resources and distance proximity mentioned above, Oromo journalists in the diasporas could not get organized to expose the institutions that treated them harshly. They failed to be agents of change, encouragement and hope for those colleagues who are either languishing in Ethiopian detention camps or are unable to work because of the threats to their very existence.

At the same time there are a few courageous individuals who have started to take steps in that direction. For example, Oromo journalists such as Tesfaye Deressa, Garuma Bekele and Solomon Namera are the founding members of journalists in exile<sup>1</sup> formed in 2000.

This organization was officially launched in 2000 and currently it brings together a small group of journalists who were forced to flee their homelands due to harassment and persecution while practicing their profession. Seeking refuge in Canada, these courageous individuals-who come from such countries as Afghanistan, Bosnia, Ethiopia, Iran, Nigeria, Peru, Romania, Srilanka, and Sudan-have started a new life with the support of CJTE. Bringing with them a wealth experience as reporters, broadcasters and editors, the members of JEX decided to devote their energy and intelligence to resuming their journalistic careers in Canada to ensure that not only that their voice be heard but that their skills be used to advantage in the free press in their adopted home land. <http://www.cjfe.org/eng/exile/exile.html>.

### **Recommendations:**

It is clear that there is no press freedom in Ethiopia although the government tries to convince the international community otherwise. Suppression of the free press is harsher in Oromia than in Abyssinia. Until for press freedoms arrive in Ethiopia, in general and Oromia in particular, it is necessary to find the means to make the voice of Oromo people to be heard, and Oromo journalists contribute to this noble idea.

1. Oromo journalists in the Diaspora should get organized and create channels of communication between others and among themselves and discuss the ways in which the voices of the Oromo could be heard internationally.
2. Oromo journalists in the diaspora should develop their own web site or media outlet to communicate with other professional associations and get professional training to enhance their skills to report on situations in which the Oromo people live.
3. Oromo journalists in the countries they live and in refugee camps should try to bring the situation in Oromia to the international media. .
4. Oromo journalists in the various international media like the VOA should try to physically be among the Oromo people in that country and try to report on the socio-economic and political facts of life of the people as they happen.



## Conclusion

I have brought up some of the major challenges that Oromo journalists are facing. Most of the points I raised are exclusively based on my first hand experiences. I have several years of work experience with the Ethiopian government owned newspaper, Berisa. Currently, the situation of the Oromo media and the problems that Oromo journalists are facing is deteriorating more than it was a couple of years ago. However, since there is no real freedom of expression, the journalists cannot expose the problems that they are facing. The Absence of press freedom hides the problem. The system is so closed and it is very hard to bring out sufficient information and present the magnitude of the problem to the world community.

In Oromia the obstacles to freedom of the press are coming both from the Ethiopian government press law and Abyssinian journalists. As the Ethiopian government discriminates against the Oromo people, Abyssinian journalists are reluctant to report issues that are relevant to the Oromo people. Such a practice is hurting the profession.

I believe that if the Oromo journalists get organized they can be an agent of change and hope. Oromo journalists in exile like me should get together and discuss the ways in which we can serve the Oromo people and play our part to flourish free press in Oromia. In my opinion, even if we are far away from Oromia, until that day of press freedom comes and the Oromo people and journalists exercise the right to expression we can make tangible differences. Oromo journalists need to form a professional organization and find ways of creating a network with other national and international journalists.

Finally let me conclude my arguments with the words of Thomas Jefferson who said two centuries ago,

To preserve the freedom of the human mind... and freedom of the press, every spirit should be ready to devote itself to martyrdom; for as long as we may think as we will and speak as we think, the condition of man will proceed in improvement.

" Thomas Jefferson to William Green Munford, 1799.

**Literatures**

World Press Freedom Day 2006, Media, Development and Poverty Eradication

[http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=21615&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=21615&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

## TYING OROMO HISTORY: THE MANIPULATION OF DRESS AND ADORNMENT DURING THE LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

Peri M. Klemm

Peri Klemm is Associate Professor of Art History, California State University

### ABSTRACT

We used to say that we put our identity in the *gaadi*, the leather strap that ties the cow's back legs when milking. This kept our identity hidden to the foreigners that came and tried to destroy it. Nowadays, our traditions are articulated through women's songs, dressing and dancing. Since many of our young men and [male] elders were killed by the Turks and the Abyssinians, it is up to the women to carry along our culture (M.S.S., personal communication, March 1, 2000)

A seventy year old Ala Oromo man, himself a respected elder and spokesperson for his clan, spoke these words to the author in his home in Baabbile, a town located near Harer. He echoed a sentiment that still resonates throughout his community: women, as performers, educators, and icons, are carriers of cultural history. Identifying the markers they carry, interpreting these choices, and explaining how these markers relate historically to a specific adversarial association with Abyssinians will be the focus of this article. This paper examines the use of fiber and leather bindings by Afran Qallo Oromo women. These bindings served as markers of war and proper action during the conquest and colonization of their homeland near the city-state of Harer under Menilek, King of Shawa, in the late 1880s.<sup>1</sup> I argue that Oromo women's dress and what women wore, specifically *barrii*, a waist belt and *maadiicha*, a leather tie became symbols of the social, political, and economic crisis brought about by the Abyssinian invasion.

Afran Qallo Oromo, the largest Oromo group in eastern Oromia situated near Harer, including the clans of Daga (subclans Noole, Jarsoo, and Humme), Ala, Oborra, and Baabbile, describe their forefathers' and foremothers' relationships with the ethnic groups and ruling dynasties of Harer and its regions as constantly fluctuating. Long before the Egyptian Occupation of Harar (1875-1885) which preceded the Abyssinian invasion, each *gosa* or clan placed these neighbors into one of three categories that determined who they considered hostile and with whom they would collaborate. The first category, *fila* or family is designated for those with whom one shares *gosa* blood or those who have been adopted into the *gosa*. The Oromo regard the few emirs of Harar with whom they swore an oath of brotherhood as *fila* thereby

creating a binding support network. It was common for Oromo clans who shared a *fila* bond with the emir to demand from him goods and financial support in exchange for familial allegiances. The second relational category is *amba* or community. *Amba* consists of those with whom one trades, works, and occasionally marries but who are not blood relations or enemies. The emirs and other leaders who took Oromo spouses or married their offspring into Oromo lines and those who developed trade between the walled city and Oromo communities were considered, along with their family and followers, *amba*. This bond was largely based on economic exchange. Finally, the last designated relationship is *diina*, or enemy. *Diina* is further divided into two meanings. One refers to those groups with whom the Oromo were at war in the past but who they have not fought within several generations and with whom, like many Somali clans, they may intermarry. Some Oromo place the Egyptian rulers in this category. The second definition of *diina* refers to those who are characterized as perpetual enemies, who deceive, wound and kill without mercy and who will even target individuals considered sanctified by Oromo law, namely Oromo women, children and the elderly. This latter type of *diina* violates the sacred, breaks all conventions of war and it is of the gravest offense. The Afran Qallo place the *Habasha* (Abyssinian) in this latter category.

Each relationship described above was recorded and passed on to subsequent generations by Oromo oral historians who, along with the leaders of Raaba-Doori, the council of political and military officials of the Oromo gadaa government, proscribed the appropriate course of action. As far as dress is concerned, the body was carefully constructed to illustrate each relationship. Dress, particularly the dress of women in the case of the *diina* relationship, was tactically used by men to solicit the sympathies of the enemy groups, particularly when peace offerings were to be presented by the offending party in order to re-establish harmonious relations. On some occasions from the 1890s onward, warriors would take off their headpieces and put down their weapons in order to wear the central part of a married woman's costume, either her *saddetta* (white cotton dress) or her *guftaa* (black hairnet) (Klemm 2002: 202). The wearing of *saddetta* and *guftaa* was intended to communicate submission, humility, and concurrence after a period of aggression and loss of life. The following three examples illustrate how the dress of a woman, when worn by a man, serves as a visual oath for peace. These examples counter those of women dressing in men's combat attire to follow.

First, historically, Afran Qallo elders state that when council leaders went to Walaabu each year to see the Abba Muuda, the Raaba-Doori ritual leaders who guarded Oromo law, those

that “carried the spoken law,” dressed in a woman’s traditional dress, *saddetta* (A.S.J. February 16, personal communication, 2000). These men would wrap eight yards of sheeting around their torso and tie the ends over their right shoulder intending to show that, while they were frail and could no longer fight, they nevertheless carried within them broad knowledge of the Oromo constitution. In this sense, a woman’s dress suggested that these men were to be respected not for their physical prowess which had long since deteriorated, but for their wisdom which came with old age. Secondly, in the 1970s, the then sixty-five year old *beera* (Oromo law) leader Adam Wadaayi placed a woman’s *guftaa* on his head as he walked to meet his *gosa* near Dire Dawa (S.M.G., personal communication, July 23, 2004). Someone from his *gosa* had killed someone from another *gosa*, and since the individual could not pay the *guma* or blood money, he traveled to his *gosa* head to ask for help. He tied *guftaa* around his hair in order to placate the angry family of the deceased and to renew peaceful relations. In this guise he was successful in begging the *gosa* leaders to provide the obligatory animals of retribution for the deceased’s clan.

A final example comes from the Kundhubblee, a subclan of the Noole *gosa*. The Kundhubblee have a long history of feuding with the Issa Somali. In the 1940s, the Noole war leader, Buraalee Sarsaree, donned a woman’s hairnet, *guftaa*, while talking to the assembly of Noole clan leaders (M.S.S., personal communication, March 3, 2000). The wearing of this garment was intended to instill patience and restraint in his followers as they plotted how to mobilize against the enemy. After this meeting, the Noole warriors successfully pushed the Issa from Harmukaa to the town of Aisha located in the semi-desert along the rail tracks to Djibouti.

In each of these cases, the wearing of a married woman’s dress or hairnet came to embody a plea for leniency, patience, and peace. Indeed, it is the tying of these garments that is said to secure peaceful action in the wearer. Men donning women’s attire is not an unfamiliar phenomenon among other Cushitic pastoralists or groups organized around an age or generational grade system in East Africa. Among the Gabra Oromo in northern Kenya too, male elders become classified as ‘women’ and hold the responsibility for peace when they enter into a senior generational grade. They adopt women’s dress styles and mannerisms (Wood 1999: 72). It is clear that Oromo women’s dress and what women wear convey specific codes of conduct specifically during states of unrest.

The Afran Qallo attempts to placate the Shawa invaders of the late 1800s proved futile, however. Whether such dress tactics described above were employed is not clear. The exchange with Menilek’s forces is mentioned by Afran Qallo elders as the most barbaric encounter in the

collective consciousness of the Oromo people. It is likely that warriors became quickly aware that these enemies would not succumb to their usual protocols for peace and a *diina* relation formed (A.Y., personal communication, February 20, 2000; S.M.G., personal communication, July 25, 2004). The stage was set for all out warfare. Women, who were customarily restricted from battle, fought with men. Their participation in the rebellion against Menileks' troops and the large loss of life sustained by the Oromo in the east became the impetus for a change in women's dress. In this case, the women who survived began to wear specific articles of dress associated with war during and after the infiltration of the Abyssinian soldiers in order to convey their hostile *diina* relationship with these foreigners. Oromo women successfully communicated this through their increased visibility and movement as travelers and traders.

### **Oromo Women's Presence During the Abyssinian Invasion**

In 1885, the Mahdist revolt in the Sudan forced the Egyptians to abandon Harer and the Egyptian Pasha and British consul placed on the throne, Emir Abdullahi Ali Abd al-Shakur (1885-87), who would become the last ruler of the independent city-state. He ruled with an eye toward isolating the town from intruders, including the Oromo, who were perceived as threatening to his dominion. During this time, many of the traders and entrepreneurs involved in commerce who had settled in Harer left for the coast. As a result, the Oromo presence around the immediate vicinity of the walled city grew stronger (Paulitschke 1888b: 208). The presence of women was especially prominent. An estimated two-thirds of the entire Harer population in 1885 consisted of women, a fact that Philipp Paulitschke suggests was equally true on the outskirts of the city where mainly Oromo resided (1888b: 208).<sup>1</sup>

The reasons for the enhanced visibility of women is likely connected to the following four points. First, the strong agricultural business that had grown up among the Oromo communities outside the wall had been established largely by women. While most Oromo men within a sixty-mile radius of the city had adopted farming as a full-time profession, women traveled to trade their agricultural surpluses in the Harer markets. While special markets for the exchange of livestock were controlled and frequented by men, they existed primarily in neighboring Oromo regions such as Fedis. Oromo women, on the other hand, walked weekly to and from the countryside to the Harer market, where they would have been more visible to foreigners like Paulitschke. Secondly, this period of growing isolationism saw a decline in the

merchant economy as foreign traders deserted the town and Emir Abdullahi Ali Abd Es-Shakur reclaimed the age-old institution of slavery. In 1885 he attacked the surrounding Afran Qallo villages and sold the male captives to slavers heading toward the coast (M.S.S., personal communication, March 3, 2000). Paulitschke mentions that while he was in Harar, the slavers fled with “Galla to smuggle them into the city and take them with a caravan to Zeila and Berbera” (1888b: 261). Coupled with the killings at the hands of the Somali, the emirs, or other *diina* groups, there were literally fewer Oromo men around. Thirdly, it was in 1885 that the *Abba Bokkus*, the Raaba-Doori leaders, began to practice publicly again and the institution of Raaba-Doori was reinstated (Paulitschke 1888b: 313). Men were spending a great deal of time in private trying to restore the generational grade system, perform vital ceremonies, and create new laws, all of which had been put on hold for the ten years of Egyptian sovereignty. Lastly, reports had already been filtering into Harer that the King of Shawa had crossed into the Awash Valley and had ordered his troops to destroy Ittuu Oromo groups they met on the road to Harer in an attempt to bring under control the land and the Oromo themselves (Caulk 1971:10, Paulitschke 1888b: 197). Fearing that their own land and lives might next be in jeopardy, Afran Qallo men might have been directing their attention to the formation of defensive strategies in private settings. For these reasons, Oromo women were more visible than ever before. It was at this time, with Egyptian laws on dress no longer in place and Oromo men’s attentions diverted due to the slaughter of the Ittuu sustained under Menilek, that women’s dress becomes a prominent political statement. In particular, the tying of fiber and leather to the body signals the displacement, enslavement, and bloodshed experienced by the Afran Qallo community during this period.

### **Men’s *Harrii* in place of Women’s *Sabbata***

A cloth waist sash called *sabbata* has traditionally been used to harness a married women’s dress of white sheeting, *saddetta*, at the waist. As a marker of marriage, it is an important symbol of womanhood for its connections to fertility, land, and history. Oral history speaks of the Great Oromo mother, the primordial mother of all Oromo people, tying this belt during the great Barentuma migration. As she encircled her waist with eight yards of cloth she bequeathed land to her eight grandsons and in the repetition of this gesture, each succeeding generation recognizes

the historical role women played in law and governance within Raaba-Doori as they repeat this action (Klemm 2006: 138-139).

When a woman's mother first binds the *sabbata* around her daughter's waist at marriage, she reminds her daughter of this important legend. In general, the *sabbata* has come to stand for the peace, patience, and security associated with motherhood. However, during the time of the Shawan invasion, this emblem of peace was removed and replaced by a men's fiber belt. Oromo female elders I spoke with in 2000 remember stories of their foremothers participating as soldiers and spies in the struggle against the invading Abyssinian army. In one particularly vivid account women climbed the mountains Tulluu Gambisaa, Tulluu Barruu, and Tulluu Ijaa and tied cowhides to the trees. They beat the skins with sticks in order to sound an alert to Oromo forces that foreign soldiers were coming so that the men might prepare defensive strategies. In this manner, they bravely defended their territory. Those women who were captured by Menilek's forces in the act of sounding the alarm were marched to Anollee in Arsii. There, many were mutilated or killed (A.Y., personal communication, February 20, 2004). During their participation in the war, these heroic women who gave their lives are said to have taken off their *sabbata* as emblems of peace and replaced them with *barrii*. The *barrii*, a reed waist piece plaited for young men by women, had previously been worn during the Raaba-Doori generational-grade period of warriorhood and served as a receptacle for weapons. Both Raaba-Doori, which had been outlawed during the Egyptian Occupation, and the fiber belts, during Menilek's invasion, were no longer in use. Remembered and recounted by the Afran Qallo today, this act, the removal of the *sabbata* and the tying of *barrii*, aroused strong Oromo nationalist sentiment during the conquest and colonization of the Oromo. The gesture not only signified the state of war and the presence of the enemy but also alerted the broader Oromo community that women, who traditionally served as agents for harmonious relations, were now actively engaged in combat with men. While this act was short lived, it signals the significant role dress played during this experience.

After this period, the wearing of *sabbata* resumed and was again associated with a peaceful state of being. Informants told me that today they teach their daughters to bind the *sabbata* tightly as a means of symbolically binding, and thus ensuring, peaceful relations. In this sense, the *sabbata* as a symbol of peace is intended to serve as a kind of talisman to ward off periods of *diina* warfare associated with *barrii*.



*Harrii* as a sign of warriorhood first for men during Raaba-Doori and later for women during Menilek's invasion is also connected to the modern belts called *sinnaara* used to hold ammunition. After their initial defeat against Menilek's forces in January 1887 at the Battle of Calanqoo, located 60 kilometers from Harer, and many subsequent battles with Abyssinian troops, Oromo men who had been acquiring guns since the first decades of the twentieth century, fashioned bullet holsters called *sinnaara* to wear around their waists. Women created a song at this time that compares the *harrii* that their foremothers once wore to the *sinnaara* that men adopted:

*Birraa birraa dararti baallii*

*sinnaara haarri akkami farri*

(In the springtime, the leaves blossom  
So how's the *sinaara* faring, having replaced the *harrii*?)

This passage is intended to reflect upon the condition of the Afran Qallo during the great turmoil of the coming of Menilek when the Raaba-Doori governing system, represented in men's belt, was completely replaced by the rule of foreign weapons, represented by the foreign bullet holster. The *sinnaara*, then, is an icon of modern warfare. This item of dress continues to be worn today by men and women who participate in the Ethiopian National Defense Force or as freedom fighters. While it no longer resembles the reed belt that men and a few women warriors once wore, the *sinnaara* today is emblematic of past challenges for Oromo soldiers (S. M. G., personal communication, February 25, 2000). In the following section, dress becomes a means with which individuals make sense of the experiences of colonization.

## **Men's Dress and the Reign of Menilek**

During the Battle of Calanqoo, nearly 4,000 Oromo and Hareri soldiers under the Emir fought Menilek's 30,000 troops (Rimbaud 1887). The French poet Rimbaud, who was trading armaments in the region, reports:

The engagement scarcely lasted a quarter of an hour...Three thousand warriors were cut up with sabers and crushed in a blink of an eye by the King of Shoa. Nearly 200 Sudanese, Egyptians, and Turks left with Abdullai after the Egyptian evacuation, and perished with the Galla and Somali warriors. This is why it is said that when the Shoan soldiers (who have never killed any whites) returned, they brought back from Harar the testicles of foreigners (1887).

Mohammed Hassen also reports that the Oromo of Harer “say among those who participated in the battle, none came back without losing either a hand or a leg or penis” (1980: 244). Arsii and Ittuu women, who also participated on the battle front as Menilek marched east, did not fare much better. Informants state that among the Arsii Oromo to the southwest of Harer, Menilek’s soldiers mutilated women who participated in the fighting by cutting off their right hand, left leg, and/or right breast (S.R., personal communication, April 4, 2000). Harming women in this manner was subject to very severe penalties according to *beera*. If the right breast is cut or severed, the breast from which babies most frequently drink, the guilty party must pay the equivalent of one human life.<sup>1</sup> Without her right breast, a new mother’s babies are more likely to die. The fact that social, political, and economic retribution was denied to the families of the thousands of Oromo men and women killed or harmed in attacks by the Shawan army permanently sealed the invaders as *diina*. These aggressors were, according to the traditions of *beera*, placed into the second categorical distinction of *diina*, a relationship of eternal enemies beyond the reach of reconciliation who target members of society who legally must remain unharmed: women, children, the elderly.

After his victory, King Menilek’s soldiers entered Harer and immediately took possession of the settlements owned by the families of those warriors defeated in the Battle of Calanqoo. As a punishment for their resistance, households in the city and the surrounding villages were also fined between 50,000 and 75,000 silver thalers (Hassen 1980: 235). Further, when Menilek returned to Shawa, the Gondari, the nickname of the soldiers left behind in Harer, “resorted to open brigandage, raiding and looting the countryside” (236). The years following the influx of the Abyssinians into Harar were particularly challenging to the Afran Qallo since over 12,000 Abyssinian soldiers and their families and slaves relied for their survival on the tribute and taxes from Oromo communities. Oromo men who did not comply with paying the heavy taxes were dragged by mules. Women could at any moment be forced into servitude, required to use their own grain to make bread for the soldiers and their families, fetch water for them, and bring them firewood. Rimbaud writes:

Collecting taxes in the surrounding region only happens through raids, in which villages are burned, livestock is stolen, and populations are taken away in slavery. The revenue from the Gallas [Oromo], customs, trading posts, markets, and other receipts, are stolen by anyone who can get at them.... Ménélik completely lacks funds, always remaining in the most complete ignorance of (or indifference to) the exploitation

of the region's resources, which he has forced into submission. He only thinks about accumulating guns in order to allow himself to send his troops to levy men from the Gallas (1887).

Driven by this persistent plundering, many Oromo families ceased farming communally and stopped their participation in trade with the coast. In the years to follow, the land tenure system imposed by Menilek forced the Oromo to convert remaining farmland to coffee plantations for exportation. The growing of the *kebat* crop was also launched as a cash crop.<sup>1</sup> Despite these changes in land rights and land use, the Oromo remained deeply invested in their land. When Ras Makonnen, Menilek's governor of Harer province and the father of the future Ethiopian emperor, Haile Selassie, embarked on a road building project through Oromo land using Oromo laborers this was aptly recorded. Robert Skinner, the first United States envoy to Ethiopia, published the alleged conversations between the Afran Qallo and Ras Makonnen:

When the fine new highway was projected between Dire-Daouah and Harrar, it became necessary to condemn the land required for its construction. The Gallas waited upon Ras Makonnen, their Governor. Their farms would be ruined, they said; the work must not go on: they could not accept the price offered for their land.

'But it is a good, fair price, is it not?' Said the Ras.

'It is not the price we complain of, most gracious lord; we don't want our farms to be destroyed.'

The Ras ordered them out of his presence, saying that there was but one Governor of Harar, and that he and he alone would say what might or might not be done. The road was constructed and a guard prevented interference with the labourers. (Quoted in Pankhurst 1975: 2)

As land was taken, farmers and their families were forced into tenancy as tribute-paying subjects (*gabbar*). And as livelihoods and land were destroyed, other life-ways were being altered. By 1900, Menilek had banned all meetings of the Raaba-Doori assembly (*chafè*), prayer gatherings, and the celebrated pilgrimage to the land of Abba Muuda in southern Ethiopia (Knutsson 1967: 155). Abba Muuda, the famous Oromo ritual leader, had served for generations as the focal point of pan-Oromo unity (Greenfield and Hassen 1992: 577). Without these cultural and religious practices, the Oromo were left with only Islam as an available organizing ideology. Mohammed Hassen writes:

Deprived of their freedom and political institutions, reduced to the status of landless gabbars in their own land, the Oromo of Harerghe had no choice but to look to Islam to provide them with an ideological framework and institutional

expression in order to survive the shock of violent defeat, loss of land, destruction of their political, cultural and religious institutions, dehumanization, subjugation and economic exploitation. It was this situation which appears to have turned them to Islam *en mass*, as a form of rejection of the colonial order created by Emperor Menilek (2000: 101).

As more and more Oromo turned to Islam as a new, legitimate, non-threatening, and non-colonial organizing principle, they adopted Muslim dress as well. However, while men adopted the imported cloth waist wraps and collared dress shirts that left them indistinguishable from their Muslim Hareri, Somali, and Argobba neighbors, Oromo women maintained their traditional dress, adding only a head scarf in public as a sign of their new religious identity. Oromo women's bodies remained a visual connection to the pre-colonial period. This is most readily apparent among pastoralist communities who were more erratically mistreated by the Abyssinian state than their agricultural counterparts. One Oromo elder recounted:

It wasn't until the Amhara came that they tried to destroy our language, our dancing, and our culture. Oromo farmers were so impoverished that they hadn't the time or resources to recreate their traditions. Only among the pastoralists is a strong sense of our culture still available. A man who practiced his culture during the time of Menilek and Haile Sellassie was arrested and the name of the crime was 'Kuburnakkaa' ('lese majesty' or 'you shamed the king') (R.M.O., personal communication, March 6, 2000).

While many Oromo men turned to Islam, others, particularly among more urban populations, began adopting an Abyssinian/Amhara-centered identity. Along with the acceptance of Amhara cultural practices, name changes, and the use of the Amharic language, Abyssinian ornaments provided some relief from persecution for Oromo men, even if they continued to identify as Muslims.<sup>1</sup> For example, by foregoing traditional forms of adornment and adopting wooden and metal neck crosses during Menilek's and later, Haile Selassie's rule, Oromo men visually showed their allegiance to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and were therefore allowed access to some of the privileges afforded the ruling Amhara ethnic group. An Afran Qallo Oromo man who traveled frequently to the capital and other Christian urban settlements might adopt highland Christian dress or tie on a cross and baptismal chord in order to "blend in" yet these items were tossed aside when one returned to his Muslim community (A.S.J., personal communication, October 6, 1999). Donham writes that "for those of the frontiers, Christian identity promised an escape from the worst aspects of Abyssinian domination" (1986: 11).

We find then that during this time of colonization, the adoption of an Islamic or Orthodox Christian identity, whether sincere or superficial, was outwardly proclaimed through men's dress. In either case, dress became a highly calculated and communicative indicator of one's faith. Yet, despite these new dress codes for men, we find that both men and women continued to embrace a deeply significant Oromo act—that of tying leather onto the body.

### **Tying *Maadiicha***

In the quote that begins this article, an image of the leather strap called *gaadi*, used to hold the milking cow's back legs, is evoked. The *gaadi*, a simple tie still used by Oromo who own livestock, is intimately connected to the pastoral livelihood of the first Afan Qallo settlers in and around Harer. In the introductory passage, the notion of an Oromo identity rooted in the past is harnessed or 'hidden' through the tying of the leather thong.

When worn by humans, these same straps of leather fashioned from hide and secured around the wrist, upper arm and neck are called *maadiicha* and are virtually indistinguishable from *gaadi*. Both the *gaadi* and the *maadiicha* leather cord are made from a strip of the thickest skin of a cow, goat, or camel, dyed red in a mixture of boiled bark and herbs. Symbolically, both act as a marker of the value placed on pastoral livelihood. The *maadiicha* mentioned by Paulitschke was intended to be worn by all participants when a female animal was to be slaughtered (1896: 279). Today, Oromo women also wear *maadiicha* tied with a piece of incense at the wrist. Like the leather of the Civet cat, who is known for its musk-like odor, the *maadiicha* with incense is intended to ward off *buda*, those with the evil eye. The idea of *buda*, a foreign concept prior to colonization, resonated for the Oromo as the embodiment of the danger of foreigners from whom they sought to protect themselves through adornment. The modern leather bracelet with incense is efficacious not as a visual deflector like most talismans, but rather for its pungent smell. Those with the evil eye are said to be repulsed by the odor and flee. During the time of Menilek's colonization, however, *maadiicha* become a symbol of men and women's active participation in warfare.

The *maadiicha* has several symbolic associations that relate to specific historical periods. For example, only one generation ago, *maadiicha*, tied on the left wrist, indicated a woman's status as single; when tied on the right wrist, proclaimed her engagement; when tied on the upper arm, indicated her status as married (Klemm 2002: 206). If worn by a well-respected woman during the

time of Raaba-Doori in conjunction with her *siqqee* or *lookkoo*, (wooden scepter), it communicated not only her power but her sacrality. A physical or verbal attack made against her while she carried these items was tantamount to war.

For young men during the time of Raaba-Doori, *maadiicha* worn on the neck, both wrists and upper arm showed a man's status as a hero. The number of pieces he wore at each site is indicative of the number of lives taken either with his weapons or with his own hands. Female warriors also wore *maadiicha* to show their status as killers, but they wore the leather tied on the forehead, called *dhibee*, accompanied by an ostrich feather. If a female warrior merely maimed or cut someone, the leather tie encircled her ankle. To show that her father, brother, and husband were warriors, she wore *maadiicha* on her upper arm.

In each of these cases, *maadiicha* can function as a metonym for the protective power of the slaughtered animal or the death of an enemy. During the rule of Menilek, informants state that the *maadiicha* was worn by both men and women for its talismanic capacity in the face of much anxiety (M. R. A., personal communication, February 20, 2000). The most potent leather from which to make *maadiicha* during the reign of Menilek came from the dried skin of the horses used by his Amhara soldiers (S. M. G., personal communication, February 25, 2000). In this sense, the destructive ability of the horse and rider is harnessed in the leather tie in much the same way that the *sabbata* is used to keep out potential harm and propagate harmonious relations.

While the *maadiicha* necklace was still being worn during Menilek's reign, a time when clothing of cotton weave had already replaced women's soft leather dresses, it has fallen into disuse today in favor of other types of necklaces, alerting us to the fact that fashion, no less than identity, is always in a state of flux.

## Conclusion

During the late nineteenth century women revived a historic item of men's dress associated with violence and tied it in place of the *sabbata*. The wearing of *harrii* was later replaced by *sinnaara* by men and less frequently women. Whether wearing *harrii*, *sabbata* or *maadiicha* made from the skin of the enemy's horse, dress is tied onto the body. This tying is a deliberate act intended to secure the ideology of war on the body, to prepare and protect it from danger, or to alert others to one's intent. Even as new materials, colors, and forms continue to change dress styles for men and women today, the act of tying continues to seal and conceal that which is most revered.

Women describe this historical period in which their foremothers became warriors as a time of great violence and chaos (Z.A. February 20, 2000, M. R. A., personal communication, February 20, 2000, R. M. O., personal communication, March 6, 2000). An Oromo proverb states: While the father is a tree outside, the mother is the center-post for the house (*Abban muka alaati, ayyoon utubaa manaati*) (Klemm 2002: 196). With the influx of social, political, religious, and economic changes brought about during the Egyptian presence and the Abyssinian invasion of Oromo lands, women's dress and what women wore was strategically used to invoke ethnic connections as well as to signal hostile relationships. The fact that certain dress types, like *maadiicha*, have survived through the Egyptian upheaval and the ensuing incorporation of Harer into the Ethiopian empire suggests that a woman's decorated body serves as a vehicle through which the past can be selectively invoked, particularly at moments of crisis when identity is threatened.

## REFERENCES

- Caulk, Richard. (1971). "The Occupation of Harar: January 1887." *The Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 9:2, 1-19.
- Caulk, Richard. (1975). "Menilek's Conquest and Local Leaders in Harar." *Paper prepared for The Conference on Harari Studies organized by the Historical Society of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa*, 1-15.
- Donham, Donald L. (1986). "Old Abyssinia and the New Ethiopian Empire: Themes in Social History." In D. Donham and W. James (Eds.), *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia: Essays in History and Social Anthropology* (pp. 3-48). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bulcha, Mekuria. (1988). *Flight and Integration: Causes of Mass Exodus from Ethiopia and Problems of Integration in the Sudan*. Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies.

- Gebissa, Ezekiel. (2004). *Leaf of Allab: Khat and Agricultural Transformation in Harerge Ethiopia, 1875-1991*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Greenfield, Richard and Mohammed Hassen. 1992. "The Oromo Nation and Its Resistance to Amhara Colonial Administration." In H. M. Adam and C. I. Gesheker (Eds.) *Proceedings of The First International Congress of Somali Studies*. (pp. 546-599). Atlanta: Scholars Press.
- Hassen, Mohammed. (1980). "Menilek's Conquest of Harar, 1887, and Its Effect on the Political Organization of the Surrounding Oromos up to 1900." In D. Donham and W. James *Working Papers on Society and History in Imperial Ethiopia: The Southern Periphery from the 1880's to 1974*. (pp. 227-246). Cambridge: African Studies Center.
- Hassen, Mohammed. (2000). "Islam as Resistance Ideology among the Oromo of Ethiopia." In Thomas Saeter and Kenneth King (Eds.) *Africa, Islam and Development: Islam and Development in Africa*. (pp. 79-114). University of Edinburgh: Centre of African Studies.
- Hassen, Mohammed. (2005). "Pilgrimage to the Abbaa Muudaa." *The Journal of Oromo Studies*. 12:1&2, 142-155
- Hassen, Mohammed. (2008). "The Egyptian Occupation of Harer and Its Impact on the Oromo of Harerge" *The Journal of Oromo Studies*. 15:2, 33-66.
- Holcomb, Bonnie K. and Sisai Ibssa. (1990). *The Invention of Ethiopia: the Making of a Dependent Colonial State in Northeast Africa*. The Red Sea Press: Trenton, New Jersey.
- Klemm, Peri M. (2002). "Fashioning History: Women's Costumes from Eastern Hararghe, 1850-1886." In B. Yimam, R. Pankhurst, D. Chapple, Y. Adamassu, A. Pankhurst, B. Teferra (Eds.). *Proceedings of the XIVth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*. (pp. 195-214). Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University.
- Klemm, Peri M. (2006). "Two Corporeal Markers of Marriage among the Afran Qallo Oromo Women in Eastern Ethiopia." In S. Uhlig (Ed.). *Proceedings of the XVth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (pp. 136-141). Wiebaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.
- Klemm, Peri M. (2009). "Oromo Fashion: Three Contemporary Body Art Practices among Afran Qallo Women." *African Arts* 42:1, 54-63.
- Knutsson, K.E. (1967). *Authority and Change: A Study of the Kallu Institution among the Macha Galla of Ethiopia*. Goteborg: Elanders Boktryckari Aktiebolag.
- Krikorian, A.D. and Getahun and A., (1973). "Chat: Coffee's Rival Form Harar, Ethiopia. Botany, Cultivation and Use." *Economic Botany* 27, 353-77.



- Pankhurst, Richard. (1975). "The Harar-Dire Dawa Road and the 'Road-Construction Association' of 1934." Paper prepared for the Historical Society of Ethiopia Conference, Addis Ababa.
- Paulitschke, Philipp. (1896). *Ethnographie Nordost-Afrikas. Die Geistige Cultur Der Danakil, Galla Und Somal*. Berlin: Geographische Verlagschandlung Dietrich Reimer.
- Paulitschke, Philipp. (1888a). *Beiträge Ethnographie Und Anthropologie Der Somal, Galla Und Harari*. Leipzig: Verlag von Eduard Baldmus.
- Paulitschke, Philipp. (1888b). *Harar. Forschungsreise Nach Den Somali- und Galla-Ländern Ost-Afrikas*. Leipzig: Brockhaus.
- Rimbaud, Jean-Nicolas-Arthur. (1887). "To the Bosphore Égyptien." (Mark Spitzer, Trans.). *Exquisite Corpse. A Journal of Letters and Life* 5/6. Retrieved from [http://www.corpse.org/issue\\_5/secret\\_agents/rimbaud.htm](http://www.corpse.org/issue_5/secret_agents/rimbaud.htm)
- Wood, John C. (1999). *When Men Are Women: Manhood among Gabra Nomads of East Africa*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.

**EXTERNAL LEGITIMACY, AUTHORITARIANISM, AND STATE TERRORISM:  
*THE TRIPLE ENEMIES OF PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT IN ETHIOPIA***

**PROFESSOR, ASAFA JALATA**

The “modern” Ethiopian state emerged in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, resulting from the confluence of three factors: the intervention of European powers in the Horn of Africa, the intensification of the process of political centralization in Abyssinia proper, and the increased war-making capacity of Amhara-Tigray warlords that resulted from asymmetric access to European firearms. These three factors occurred in the context of the development of capitalism in Western Europe and its expansion into Africa in the international political process of colonization known as the “Scramble for Africa.” The intervention of European colonial powers in Abyssinia proper facilitated the process of political centralization by increasing the war-making capacity Amhara-Tigray warlords thus enabling them to gradually create the Ethiopian Empire. With the support of European powers, the Abyssinian/Ethiopian state emerged as a dependent-client state whose legitimacy on the world stage was dependent upon its relationship with a sequence of world powers who served as its benefactors. As a dependent-client state, the Ethiopian Empire achieved external legitimacy but lacked internal legitimacy from the ethnonations who were colonized and forced into the empire at gunpoint. The successive regimes of Menelik, Haile Selassie, Mengistu Haile Mariam, and Meles Zenawi have followed similar policies and practices in achieving external legitimacy while promoting a series of different ideological discourses to legitimize their respective governments.

The modern Ethiopian state has survived to the present day without achieving internal legitimacy. For more than a century, it has defended the interests of the Amhara-Tigray heads of state, state elites, and, to lesser degree, the interests of the Amhara-Tigray ethnonational groups from which the successive state leaders have emerged. While drawing its external political legitimacy from external powers, this state, through its leadership, has attempted to construct and maintain itself using the particularistic ideological foundations of Semitic ancestry, Orthodox Christianity, and Abyssinian (Amhara-Tigray) political culture within a political unit made up of a multinational and multi-religious population. As a result, the leadership has been unable to create the social consensus necessary to achieve the level of internal legitimacy necessary for Ethiopia to transform itself into a viable and self-sufficient country. To maintain their power, successive state leaders have maintained order through authoritarian structures where that is sufficient and state

terrorism when necessary. Consequently, Ethiopia has remained an impoverished empire-state known to the world for its recurrent famines, wars, diseases, abject poverty, and a lack of respect for human rights. Without critically understanding the essence and characteristics of this state, it is impossible to recommend an appropriate and acceptable political solution that respects the legitimate political aspirations of its multinational populace.

This paper critically explores four interrelated issues. First, it explores how the Euro-American intervention on the side of Amhara-Tigray successive state elites provided it with external legitimacy. Second, it explains how the convergence of identity, religion, and political power created a political culture of authoritarianism in Amhara and Tigray society that ignored the life, liberty, and human rights of its multinational populace enabling it to survive in spite of the lack of internal legitimacy. Third, it focuses on and explains the essence and consequences of the policies and practices of political authoritarianism in Abyssinia proper and state terrorism in the colonized parts of the Ethiopian Empire. Finally, the paper explores how the Ethiopian state's policies and practices of political authoritarianism and state terrorism have undermined the processes of peace and development, and proposes some pragmatic policies to boldly confront and solve these complex and difficult political problems.

### **External Legitimacy, Dependency, and the Ethiopian State**

Over the last century-and-a-quarter, Abyssinian leaders have achieved external legitimacy for their governments as witnessed by a combination of 1) a legitimating discourse that appealed to the sensibilities of a patron state, 2) the extraction of colonial area resources for the benefit of the patron state, the interstate capitalist system, and the current Ethiopian leadership structure 3) recognition of the Ethiopian government in world fora and at the diplomatic level, 4) the provision of military training, weapons and other military hardware by major state actors in order to consolidate and maintain the Ethiopian state, 5) coordinated diplomatic and military activity on the part of Ethiopia in consonance with the needs and wishes of the benefactor state, and 6) access to technical assistance to build a semblance of the infrastructure and bureaucracy that is necessary to consolidate a modern state.

Prior to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the numerous ethnonational groups that inhabited the interior of the Horn of Africa were able to maintain a rough military parity with one another. The territory of these nations expanded and contracted over time depending upon social

organization and the relative skills of the various leaders. This parity of power was disrupted when European imperialism expanded into the region in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as France, Britain, and Italy vied with each other for control of the area. In the Scramble for Africa, Abyssinian warlords were able to take advantage of their Christian identity and of the rivalry among the three European powers to obtain the resources and the external interstate legitimacy necessary for them to expand their territory, conquering the territory, people, and resources of neighboring ethnations thus establishing the Ethiopian Empire (Holcomb and Ibssa, 1990; Jalata, 1993).

The actions of Tewodros capitalized on underlying Abyssinian concerns and set in motion a series of events that led to the establishment of the modern Ethiopian Empire. Between 1855 and 1868, under the leadership of Tewodros, some of the Abyssinians engaged in a series of campaigns to both colonize and convert the Wallo and Yejju Oromos to Orthodox Christianity or expel or exterminate them. Prior to this time, the Wallo, Yejju, Azabo, and Raya Oromos had accepted Islam “as bulwark against being swamped by Abyssinian nationalism” (Trimingham, 1965: 109). The Ethiopian rulers had long feared both Islam and the Oromo “and the thought of the two in combination [was] their recurring nightmare” (Baxter, 1978: 285). Tewodros was able to mobilize Abyssinians against the Oromo by reintroducing this fear. Despite his barbaric campaigns and the attempt to deport the Wallo Oromo en masse to western Abyssinia, Tewodros failed to effectively control them.

On October 29, 1862, Tewodros wrote two identical letters to Queen Victoria of England and Emperor Napoleon III of France expressing his hate for the Oromo: “My fathers, the emperors, having forgotten the creator, He handed over their kingdom to the Galla [Oromo]...But God created me, lifted me out of the dust and restored this empire to my rule. He endowed me with power and enabled me to stand in the place of my fathers. By this power I drove away the Gallas” (Quoted in Greenfield and Hassen, 1980: 8). After Queen Victoria ignored the letter, Tewodros mistreated and imprisoned British diplomats in Abyssinia. As a result, Great Britain sent an expeditionary force to release them. Yohannes of Tigray and Menelik of Amhara, rivals of Tewodros, then allied themselves with the British to destroy Tewodros. Yohannes provided logistical support for an expeditionary force of Great Britain that was sent to release those British who were imprisoned by Tewodros. Tewodros was defeated by the British expeditionary force and committed suicide in 1868 without completing the process of the creation of the modern Ethiopian state. He was unsuccessful in this project because he lacked

“both [the] resources and [the] experience needed to handle the European powers properly” (Venkataram, 1973: 129-145). The death Tewodros was followed with fierce competition and conflict between various centralizing warlords, such as Gobaze of the Amhara, Wag, and Lasta, Kasa of Tigray alias Yohannes, and Menelik of Shawa.

On July 11, 1871, with the military and political assistance he received from the British Kasa defeated Gobaze at the battle of Assam and proclaimed himself Emperor Yohannes IV on January 21, 1872. He also established his suzerainty over Menelik of Shawa and Adal Tassama (Takla Haymanot of Gojjam) and began to collect taxes (Pankhurst, 2001: 163). Yohannes “was militarily powerful, in part on account of the gift of arms he had received from the Napier expedition, and the assistance given to him by a former member of the British force, John Kirkham, who had volunteered to train his army on European lines” (Pankhurst, 2001: 162). During his reign, between 1872 and 1889, Yohannes faced three external political pressures. As the Italians were expanding their colonial territory from the Red Sea coast into Tigray, they made an alliance with Menelik in Shawa who was consolidating his power. During this period, the Egyptians and the Mahdists of the Sudan were also fighting Yohannes (Jalata, 1993: 49). On March 9, 1889 at the battle of Matamma the Mahdists killed Yohannes, creating the requisite political space for Menelik to expand his power and control.

With the support of Great Britain, France, and Italy, Menelik’s colonization of non-Abyssinians, particularly the Oromo, allowed him to gain access to the abundant human and material resources that he mercilessly exploited so that he could purchase the modern weaponry and expertise necessary to create and maintain the Ethiopian empire (see Jalata, 1993; Holcomb and Ibssa, 1990). Since the extraction of produce was very limited in Abyssinia proper, the main economic resources were obtained from the colonized and racialized population groups. Glen Bailey (1980: 12) notes, “the creation of the empire-state was financed by the southern expansion. Tribute along with revenue from the control of the slave trade (an estimate 25,000 slaves per year in the 1880s) and valuable ivory, coffee and civet exports financed Menelik’s consolidation of power.” Using a Christian ideology and the willingness of the Abyssinian ruling class to collaborate with the European imperialist powers, Menelik gained access to the European technology, weapons, administrative and military expertise, and other skills that allowed him to consolidate the modern Ethiopian clientele state (Pankhurst 2001: 179). Successive rulers followed the pattern set by Menelik even though the configuration of patron states providing external legitimacy changed.

When Menelik died in 1913, his successor Iyasu's attempt to change the trajectory of Ethiopian politics met with opposition from the Abyssinian elites, the Christian establishment, and the Allied powers. Iyasu "desired to do away with the religious and national distinctions that prevailed in the empire...and began to build a foundation for some kind of national unity on a different model from that which was already in place and to establish a base support different from that of" the Ethiopian establishment (Holcomb and Ibssa, 1990: 158). The European-Abyssinian establishments vehemently opposed Iyasu's policies of making an independent decision by introducing economic and political reforms and by equalizing Christians and Muslims and other religious (Holcomb and Ibssa, 1990: 152-171). Consequently, in 1916 he was overthrown by an alliance of the colonial settlers, the Orthodox Church, and the Allied Powers and replaced by Haile Sellassie, the leader of the *nafxanya* (settler) class.

Italy colonized Ethiopia between 1935 and 1941 deposing Haile Sellassie, reorganizing the state, eliminating the hated *nafxanya/gabbar* (semi-slavery) system, and changing the land tenure system. With the defeat of the Italians in the Horn of Africa, the British restored Haile Sellassie to the throne in 1941. Because of the conditions at the time, Great Britain decided it was more expedient to restore the Haile Sellassie clientele government than engage in establishing a colonial government over Ethiopia (Jalata, 1993: 86). On December 19, 1944, Great Britain made an agreement with the Haile Sellassie government to build the Ethiopian bureaucracy by providing a British military mission for raising, organizing, and training a strong central army that could defend the Ethiopian state (Hiwet, 1975: 87). The agreement "served Haile Sellassie very well and allowed him to concentrate on normalizing domestic matters while Great Britain policed Ethiopia, seeing to it that opposition to the emperor was kept in check" (Hiwet, 1975: 87-88).

From 1941 to 1960, the expansion of the centralized bureaucracy and social services in Ethiopia were the major development (Bailey, 1980: 37). By building Haile Sellassie's bureaucracy, and suppressing opposition forces, Great Britain enabled the regime to implement its political and economic policies in accordance with the British interest. The growth of the Ethiopian bureaucracy and increased produce extraction from within strengthened the Haile Sellassie government. The United States also played a significant role in building the Ethiopian state. In the 1940s and 1950s, the United States was interested in the Horn of Africa in general and Eritrea, a former Italian Colony, and Ethiopia in particular for two main reasons. Early on the priority was the establishment of a military post with a global communications network in Eritrea in order to challenge the military expansionism of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in the

early 1940s. Once WWII was over, the United States' goal was to monitor the activities of the former Soviet Union in this part of the world (Schraeder, 1994: 114-120).

As Ethiopia used the influence of the United States to incorporate Eritrea into Ethiopia, the United States tried to use Ethiopia to limit the expansion of the former Soviet Union in the Horn of Africa. In 1956, the U.S. National Security Council accepted the arguments advanced by the Bureau of Near Eastern and African Affairs, and “acknowledged Ethiopia’s overriding political importance to the United States as a regional bulwark against the spread of Egyptian and communist radicalism in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa, and directed the Defense Department to ‘provide the Ethiopian Armed Forces with limited military equipment and training of kind suitable for maintaining internal security and offering resistance to local aggression’” (Schraeder, 1994: 120-121). Ethiopia and the United States signed a mutual defense assistance agreement in 1953 which remained in effect until 1977. The defense treaty closely linked Ethiopia to the United States. The United States considered “its political investment in Ethiopia as an investment toward the future realization of its wider interests in Africa” (Agyeman-Duah, 1984: 209).

On its part, the Haile Sellassie government wanted to obtain dependable supply of military and security resources to be used against its internal and external enemies. The regime was successful in receiving military aid from the United States and suppressing its enemies. The U.S. military and economic assistance helped Haile Sellassie remain in power for a long period. According to Peter Schwab (1979: 101), “Without the military weapons received from the United States, it was unlikely that Haile Sellassie could have maintained himself on the throne. Half of all United States military assistance to Africa was channeled to Ethiopia.” The U.S. modernization programs were also economic and educational. In 1952, the Point Four Program under the U.S. International Cooperation Administration was extended to Ethiopia. Through this program, the United States trained and developed Ethiopian bureaucrats in the fields of agriculture, public administration, finance, commerce, industry, and health. The modernization programs continued in the 1960s and the 1970s; thousands of Peace Corps volunteers were sent to implement such programs. Consequently, the United States strengthened the Ethiopian state elites who had little knowledge of the modern world in technical and administrative fields.

While the Haile Sellassie regime used the ideology of Orthodox Christianity and the Solomonic myth as a legitimizing discourse, the uprising that deposed him in 1974 had to look elsewhere. The military regime (the *derg*) that came to power in the cauldron of competing

popular groups needed another ideology justifying its position in keeping the crumbling empire intact. Between 1974 and 1977, while the *derg* searched for a legitimizing ideology that moved the regime beyond the ideology of Orthodox Christianity and the Solomonic myth, it received financial and military aid worth \$180 million from the U.S.A. (Korn, 1986:21) Gradually the *derg's* claim of an anti-imperialist position, the nationalization of American-owned industries, which were estimated at US\$30 million, and the killing of 60 top former officials broke the relationship between the U.S. and Ethiopia (Korn, 1986:1-21).

This condition blocked the *derg* from buying the amount of arms it wanted from the U.S. The reorganization of the crumbling empire, fighting against the national movements and other organizations, and conflict with Somalia required a huge amount of arms. Mengistu, the eventual leader of the *derg*, wanted Soviet arms badly to keep the empire together. The former Soviet Union allied with and contributed to the survival of the military regime led by Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam for seventeen years. For Colonel Mengistu's regime, to be allied with the former U.S.S.R. and to obtain the firearms essential for keeping the crumbling empire intact were questions of life and death. From 1977 to 1986, the former Soviet Union alone provided arms valued between \$2 and \$4 billion (Korn, 1986: 91) for a military regime that failed even to feed its famine-stricken population. Up until 1989, the Soviet Union military assistance to Ethiopia was estimated at \$7 billion (Press, 1989: 4). Between 1974 and the mid-1980s, the army increased tenfold, from 45,000 to 480,000 (Korn, 1986: 91). With the demise of the Soviet power in the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, with the intensification of national liberation struggles, and with the crisis of the Ethiopian army, the Mengistu regime collapsed in 1991.

With the support of the United States, Meles Zenawi, the leader of the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF), replaced Mengistu Haile Mariam as the head of the state. The United States supported the creation of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary democratic Front (EPRDF) by the TPLF, and with Israel, it financed the flight of Mengistu to Zimbabwe in 1991, and endorsed the emergence of the Meles regime (Jalata, 1993: 177-197). It still provides all necessary assistance to the regime. U.S. foreign policy makers primarily support regimes like that of Ethiopia for perceived strategic and economic self-interest. U.S. officials are more concerned with political stability, economic reform, and the existence of regimes such as that of Ethiopia at any cost, and cared less for democracy and human rights. *The Economist* (1997: 36) comments that Meles Zenawi "is regarded as one of Africa's 'new leaders': he recently won an award in the



United States for good government....Their [Western] governments tend to give priority to the Prime Minister's economic reforms rather than his record on human rights.”

### **Internal Legitimacy among Abyssinians and Colonized Peoples: Different Outcomes**

Successive Abyssinian regimes have attempted to achieve internal legitimacy through the process of Amharization/Christianization by creating through force if necessary a common ethnonational identification (Ethiopian), a common religion (Ethiopian Orthodox Church), a universal narrative that imbues people with a common set of values and goals (those of the Abyssinian people and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church), and a common worldview on the nature of authority (acceptance of authoritarian rule as reflective of the will of God) (Tamrat, 1972; Hoben 1970, 1973; Markakis, 1974). Given the different cultural and historical narratives that are present among the nationalities represented in Ethiopia, the attempt of the successive Ethiopian governments to establish internal legitimacy has been met with generalized success among the Abyssinian population and failure among many of the conquered ethnonations.

In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, remnants of the Christian Auxumite kingdom developed a separate identity known as Amhara (Jalata, 1993). The Amhara ethnonational group and another group known as Tigray are collectively called Abyssinians. The two groups of Abyssinians maintained a common religion, the Abyssinian now Ethiopian Orthodox Church, common traditions and customs, but different languages. The Amhara are the larger of the two groups. In their conquest of the interior of the Horn of Africa during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Abyssinians used their state power to impose their Christian religion and their languages—Amharinga and Tigragna—as well as their customs on the more than 75 ethnonational groups they colonized of which the Oromo are the largest.

Using a discourse of Semitic (i.e. racial: The Abyssinians saw themselves as Semites, not Africans) (Jalata, 2001) and Christian (religious) superiority, the Ethiopian elites and their leaders strengthened the sense of common identity among the Amhara and Tigray. This racial and religious identity is rooted in a universal narrative involving the mythical claims of a 3000 year lineage of Abyssinian rulers genealogically linked to Solomon, the ancient King of Israel. The successive kings of this Solomonic dynasty claimed that they were elected by God and placed themselves at the top of the secular and religious hierarchies, asserting the power to appoint or

dismiss their administrators and church officials (Jalata, 1993:33). The document known as the *Kebra Nagast*, glory of the kings, rationalized and legitimized the monarchy using this Solomonic narrative (Budge, 1932) and, by extension, related the Abyssinians to the chosen people of Israel. According to *Kebra Nagast*: “God has appointed all these rulers and given them authority; one that opposes the ruler and is against him, rebels against the ordinances of God, his creator. Those who rebel against the rulers secure their condemnation” (Strauss, 1968:29).

The sense of racial superiority is also tied to this narrative for while most Abyssinians are phenotypically African, they see themselves as Semitic people—as children of Solomon—and thus superior to the Africans who constituted the other ethnations they conquered in the creation of the Ethiopian state (Jalata, 2001:95-105). The sense of racial superiority in Ethiopia is similar to what can be found in the U.S. In the U.S., people are considered to be African-American if they have one drop of African blood—skin color is not the issue. Similarly in Ethiopia, one is Semitic if one could claim one drop of Solomonic blood. This perceived Semitic identity allowed Abyssinians to identify themselves more closely with Europe and Europeans than with Africa and Africans and aided them in their achievement of external legitimacy. It also created a cohesive bond among the Abyssinians that allowed them to distinguish themselves from other residents of the Ethiopian state. The existence of written languages, Amharic, Tigrana, and the ancient religious language, Geez, and the absence of a written form of many of the languages of the conquered peoples also contributed to the Abyssinians’ sense of superiority over their non-literate neighbors.

When the Haile Selassie regime fell—and with it the Abyssinian sense of internal legitimacy that came with the myth of 3,000 years of Solomonic rulers—the *derg* attempted to achieve internal legitimacy through its program of *Ethiopia Tikedem* (Ethiopia First) as a rhetorical device to persuade people to subjugate their individual ethnational identities to that of Ethiopia. The new regime denounced Haile Selassie while at the same time praising Tewodros, Yohannes, and Menelik as the builders of the Ethiopian state. In addition, the Mengistu regime used the concept of revolutionary socialism in an attempt to create a universal narrative that would unify the various nationalities within Ethiopia with a common set of values and goals. However, the *derg* was put on the defensive by the development of national liberation movements among a number of the conquered peoples. Even Abyssinian co-religionists, the Tigray, developed a national liberation front which was among those who brought the *derg* down in 1991. With the support of the United States, Meles Zenawi, the leader of the Tigrayan People’s

Liberation Front (TPLF) replaced Mengistu Haile Mariam as the head of the state. In coming to power, the TPLF marginalized the Oromo Liberation Front, keeping control of the Ethiopian state fully in the hands of the Abyssinians.

Over time the Abyssinians came to see the conquest of other ethnations within the Horn of Africa as the reestablishment of what they perceived to be the historical bounds of ancient Abyssinian empires. They then appended the name “Ethiopia”—a name embedded within Jewish and Christian scriptures—to their newly conquered territory using a name that had an air of ancient legitimacy among Christian and Euro-American peoples (Melbaa, 1980). Thus for the Abyssinians Mengistu’s appeal to “Ethiopia First” and Meles’ appeal to the territorial integrity of Ethiopia contributed to the legitimacy of their rule. For the Abyssinians, successive governments achieved a generalized internal legitimacy by giving a nod to a common narrative—the 3,000 years of Solomonic rule and the ancient identity of Ethiopia—that unified Abyssinians around issues of religion, race, and a common sense of authority. When the Haile Sellassie reign began to crumble, Amhara elements quickly took control of a generalized uprising to maintain control within their community. Similarly, when the *derg* lost the support of a crumbling Soviet Union, the Tigrayan Peoples Liberation Front quickly established its dominance over the other national liberation movements that were allied against the Mengistu government. Once again state power was retained within the Abyssinian community with the support of Euro-American powers.

Among the Abyssinians one can distinguish between the legitimacy of an Abyssinian controlled state and the legitimacy of a given government. During the monarchical period, the death of Menelik eventually brought about the rising and deposing of Iyasu—who had non-Abyssinian Oromo blood—and the establishment of the rule of Ras Mekonen as Haile Sellassie through palace intrigue and a struggle among various Abyssinian elements. For the Abyssinian elite, though the Ethiopian state maintained legitimacy, Iyasu lacked the legitimacy that Haile Sellassie provided. When Haile Sellassie’s government lost legitimacy in the eyes of a crucial portion of population, the legitimacy of the government was maintained by Mengistu. Again when the Mengistu government was weakened by internal and external events, Meles and the TPLF maintained a sense of governmental legitimacy among the Abyssinian populace while it is doubtful that they would have seen a government with significant Oromo influence and leadership as legitimate. The difficulty of the Ethiopian state in establishing internal legitimacy among the colonized nations lies both in the differences between the religion, values and

structure of the dominant Abyssinian society and those of the other ethnations. This can clearly be seen with regard to the Oromos, the largest of the conquered ethnations. The presence of liberation forces among other nationalities within Ethiopia suggests that the same argument could be made for them as well.

An understanding of *Waqaa*, the divine being of the monotheistic religion of the Oromo, serves as a starting point from which one can understand Oromo traditions and the differences between Oromo religion, values and worldview on the nature of authority (Bartels, 1983) and those of the Abyssinians who for 125 years have controlled the Ethiopian state. In Oromo religion, based on a belief in *Waqaa*, we find the ideology and principles that historically informed the institutions, organizations and systems of power balance within Oromo society. While in the past century and a half many Oromo have adopted Christianity or Islam as their religion, the ongoing traditions and cultural institutions have been formed in large part by the older, relative to Oromo society, Oromo religion based on *Waqaa*.

*Waqaa* is the creator of the universe and the source of all life. The universe created by *Waqaa* contains within itself a sense of order and balance that is to be made manifest in human society.

Oromos believe that society collapses unless a balance is struck between female and male, young and old, spiritual and physical power in the cosmic order of *Waqaa*'s wisdom. The interdependence of the dominant and the liminal is considered a precondition for peace and prosperity in both metaphysical and practical sense.

Oromos refer to this concept of peace and order of *Waqaa* as *safuu* [moral and ethical codes). *Safuu* is extremely important in Oromo religious and political thought. If the balance is disturbed, it is said that *safuu* is lost (Kumsaa, 2006).

This balance can be seen in the concept of property rights within the Oromo community where land is held in common and livestock are owned by the family. The men traditionally were responsible for raising the cattle and using them for farming and women do the milking and are responsible for the distribution of the milk. *Waqaa* is intolerant of injustice and crime, opposing the exploitation of both people and nature because injustice disrupts the peace and order of the cosmos. The present domination of the Oromo people and the non-sustainable use of the land that has resulted from colonization by Abyssinians represent a loss of *safuu* and violate the

precepts of *Waqaa*. The maintenance of safuu includes the responsibility of society to protect the weak and calls for the congruence of individual and societal interests.

Within Oromo society the precepts of *Waqaa* have become institutionalized in social constructs like *gadaa*—Oromo popular democracy. *Gadaa* is a democratic tradition that organizes the male population into both 8-year age-determined gada grades (*birya*—determined by birth year) and 8-year generational *gadaa* sets (*luba*—entered into 40 years after father) (Jalata, 2005a: 18-19). Within the *gadaa* system, power is rotated every eight years and *gadaa* includes representation of many segments of society as well as a set of checks and balances that makes it difficult for any one individual or group to establish autocratic power over Oromo society and its institutions. Election to office is by universal male suffrage excluding members of a limited number of caste groups (Jalata, 2005a: 19). Women were able to exercise and protect their rights through a parallel institution called *siqqee*. While the historical development of *gadaa* has not been thoroughly documented, it is clear that it was operational in Oromo Society at the beginning of the sixteenth century. However, as conflict over land resources within and among the Oromo and their neighbors (Tigray, Amhara, Somali, Afar, etc.) increased, the *gadaa* system began to break down in some Oromia regions. Eventually, under wartime pressure, some Oromo groups established kings, but even then the rights of kings were limited by the remnants of the *gadaa* system. Oromos also share a common language, *Afaan Oromoo*.

While Oromos don't share a common religion—the major religious affiliations are Oromo traditional religion, Ethiopian Orthodox, Islam, Catholic, and Protestant—they exhibit a high degree of religious tolerance showing respect for each other's religious practices. In the case of the Oromos, their unity is shown not in a common religion, but in a commonly shared respect for the religion of others. To show disrespect for the religion of another disturbs the harmony of the community resulting in the loss of *safuu*. The contrast between the religious diversity and tolerance of the Oromos and the presumed superiority of and central place of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the life of the Abyssinians provides a significant hurdle in a state where internal legitimacy is in part based on a common religion.

Similarly, the Oromo concept of *gadaa* with its emphasis on a democratic polity differs dramatically from the Abyssinian worldview of authority which begins with God who gives authority to an earthly regent. In this structure, any defiance of that earthly regent represents a defiance of God. While, through *gadaa*, Oromos hold their leaders accountable, within Abyssinian society, it is the people who are accountable to what to date has been a succession of singular

leaders—God’s earthly regents. The differences in polity and the understanding of the nature of authority has made it difficult for the successive regimes that have controlled Ethiopian state to establish a sense of internal legitimacy among the Oromo. Abyssinian society finds order in a hierarchical structure of society which in the monarchical period included “15 military ranks and 13 civilian ranks below the level of royalty” (Legesse, 2006: 13). This hierarchical understanding of society is consistent with the Abyssinian racialized Semitic discourse which they believe makes them superior to those of “African” descent. In contrast to that Oromo society is based on an understanding of the essential equality of all persons within the state.

Using a discourse of racial and religious superiority, the Ethiopian colonial project attempted overcome these barriers and create internal legitimacy through the Abyssinization of the conquered peoples—by forcing them to abandon their African heritage, language, traditions, and religion. The goal was the complete destruction of the identity of the colonized population groups. The colonization and destruction of various population groups throughout the conquered territory and the expropriation of their lands and economic resources, the establishment of military colonies, the evangelization of the remnants of the colonized population groups, and their cultural assimilation were the continuous process of Abyssinization/Christianization and the marginalization of those who held to their ethnonational/African roots (Tamrat, 1972). The Abyssinian kingdom and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church played leading roles in the process of the colonization, Abyssinization/Christianization, and marginalization or destruction of indigenous people.

While at the time of the conquest, many of the people within the Ethiopian state spoke languages that had not been reduced to writing, attempts to produce written forms of many of these languages was met with resistance by Ethiopian authorities, and if these languages were to be produced in written form then these same authorities insisted on the use of the Geez alphabet rather than the more universal Latin/English alphabet. The fear was that the presence of written forms of these languages would eliminate one of the rationales for using Amharic and thus undermining the Amharization/Christianization enterprise. The efforts at Amharization/Christianization were largely counterproductive as large numbers became Muslim, Protestants, or more fully involved in traditional religion as a way of defying the goals of successive Ethiopian governments to establish internal legitimacy through the acceptance of a common religion, language, and national narrative.

The very elements by which the Ethiopian state established legitimacy among the Abyssinians—common religion, common language, common set of values and a common worldview on the nature of authority were in the end the very elements that made it difficult for the state to establish internal legitimacy among most of the conquered populace. The ethnic federalism that was instituted by the Tigrayan-based Ethiopian government also failed to provide internal legitimacy in the colonized states such as Oromia because the replacement the Amhara power by that of Tigray was unable to change the essence and characteristics of the Ethiopian colonial state. Still the colonized peoples are racialized and hierarchically organized by the Tigrayan-led regime that engages in state terrorism, hidden genocide, and massive human rights violations (Jalata, 2005b). We will explore these issues below.

### **Political Authoritarianism as a Means of Political Control among the Abyssinians**

The Ethiopian state has achieved some degree of legitimacy among the Abyssinian population with leaders and citizens alike holding a common set of values that are closely tied to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. There is the common presumption that Orthodox Christianity is superior to other religions, even to the point of expecting that those who hold public positions are members of the church. Tigrayans support the use of Amharic as the national language even when they are in control of the national government, as they presently are. Though it may not be as strong as it was during the reign of Menelik and Haile Sellassie, the concepts contained in *Kebra Nagast* are deeply ingrained in Abyssinian society constraining political choices. These deeply held values predispose Abyssinian society to allow authority to be concentrated within a very small circle of persons.

The authoritarian nature of the Ethiopian state can be seen in the way it is highly militarized and repressive. It tightly controls information and resources in the form of foreign aid, domestic financial resources, and political appointments. It also directly owns and controls all aspects of state power including security and military institutions, judiciary and other public bodies, and financial institutions (Bestman, 1999: 2-25; Jalata, 2000: 64-89). It provides access to economic resources to some favored supporters of the state while denying them—even removing access to resources they already control—to persons who are not supportive of the current leadership. The Ethiopian state is authoritarian in that it is controlled by a small group of

individuals be they Emperors and courtiers in monarchical times or singular individuals and committee or party members in more current times. Political change is infrequent in the authoritarian Ethiopian state and comes not by an expression of democratic political will, but by court intrigue or revolution.

Again the alignment of a hierarchical religious authority structure with a hierarchical political structure is consistent with *Kebra Nagast* and the underlying political values and understandings of Abyssinian society. Thus the fact that decisions are made by those in authority is sufficient to ensure compliance by most members of Abyssinian society. The Ethiopian ruling class used political authoritarianism, Christian ideology, and ethnic affinity to control the Abyssinian peasant and extract their labor and produce (Crummey, 1981: 127). Elections and other semblances of democracy are implemented, not to gain internal legitimacy or affect the internal decision making process, but to continue to maintain external legitimacy in the eyes of major state benefactors. Elections are showcase events rather than exercises in true democracy. Full democracy runs counter to the ingrained acceptance and expectation of authoritarian rule within Abyssinian society.

### **State Terrorism as a Means of Political Control in the Colonized Nations**

Failing to achieve internal legitimacy through Amharization/Christianization of the bulk of the populace, the Ethiopian elite have sought other ways to ensure the integrity of the state and compliance with its decisions. One of these ways is relying on members of non-Abyssinian ethnations who have sought to ensconce themselves within the dominant Abyssinian society by adopting Amharic names, joining the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and using Amharic as their preferred language even to the point of refusing to use their native language, hoping to avoid being identified with members of their conquered nation. Out of personal choice, political expediency, and/or economic gain these Amharized/Christianized individuals have decided to accept the common set of values and understanding that bind Abyssinians into a coherent society. For these individuals, for whatever reason, the Ethiopian state has achieved a degree of legitimacy and they exhibit a willingness to adhere to its strictures. Members of this collaborator class were often used as intermediaries to reduce conflict with the conquered population. Despite their work on behalf of their overlords, they are never fully accepted into Amhara-Tigray society, but remained second class members of society despite the nature of the positions they achieved.



When the work of the collaborator class, authoritarian rule, and attempts to gain the voluntary consent of the governed failed to achieve the political and economic objectives of the Ethiopian ruling class, the authorities resorted to state sponsored terrorism. State-terrorism is a systematic policy of a government through which massive violence is practiced to impose terror on a given population group to change their behavior of political struggle or resistance. The main assumptions of such a state are that it can control the population by destroying their culture of resistance and leaders. States that fail to establish internal legitimacy, ideological hegemony, and political order are unstable and insecure, and hence they engage in state terrorism. Annamarie Oliverio (1997: 48-63) describes two essential features of state terrorism:

First, the state reinforces the use of violence as a viable, effective, mitigating factor for managing conflict; second, such a view is reinforced by culturally constructed and socially organized processes, expressed through symbolic forms, and related in complex ways to present social interests. Within increasing economic and environmental globalization, gender politics, and the resurgence of nationalities within territorial boundaries, the discourse of terrorism, as a practice of statecraft, is crucial to the construction of political boundaries. As such, terrorism is invoked in the art of statecraft when multiple, often conflicting versions of the past are produced and, at particular historical moments, become sites of intense struggles.

As such, State-terrorism is associated with the issues of control of territory and resources and the construction of political and ideological domination (Oliverio, 1999). In the Ethiopian Empire, state-terrorism manifests itself in multiple forms. Its obvious manifestation is violence in the form of war, assassination, murder, torture, rape, confiscation of properties by the police and the army, forcing people to submission by intimidation, beating, and disarming citizens (Pollock, 1997; Oromia Support Group, 1996, 1997; Trueman, 1997).

The Abyssinian warlords created the Ethiopian empire by terrorizing and committing genocide on the Oromo and other peoples during the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Jalata, 2005; Holcomb and Ibssa, 1990). With the resources of the colonized peoples Menelik “rewarded his generals, paid his soldiers, and bought first from the French and then from the Italians, huge supplies of arms and ammunition wherewith to equip his ever-growing armies” (Murray, 1922: 36). The Abyssinian state and its agents were primarily interested in resource extraction by transferring the ownership of lands and other resources to themselves and forcing the people to work for them without paying them for their labor; colonial agents were interested in “fiscal and political-security” and “prevention of an uprising” (Bulatovich, 2000: 68). During

Ethiopian/Abyssinian colonial expansion, Oromia, “the charming Oromo land, [would] be ploughed by the iron and the fire; flooded with blood and the orgy of pillage” (De Salviac 1901, 349).

Calling this event as “the theatre of a great massacre,” Martial De Salviac (1901, 349) states,

The conduct of Abyssinian armies invading a land is simply barbaric. They contrive a sudden irruption, more often at night. At daybreak, the fire begins; surprised men in the huts or in the fields are three quarter massacred and horribly mutilated; the women and the children and many men are reduced to captivity; the soldiers lead the frightened herds toward the camp, take away the grain and the flour which they load on the shoulders of their prisoners spurred on by blows of the whip, destroy the harvest, then, gluttoned with booty and intoxicated with blood, go to walk a bit further from the devastation. That is what they call ‘civilizing a land.’

The Oromo oral story testifies that Amharas and Tigrayans and their supporters destroyed and looted the resources of Oromia, committed genocide on the Oromo and others through massacre, slavery, depopulation, mutilating hands and breasts, famine, and diseases before and after they colonized Oromia and other territories. Recognizing this tragedy, “the Oromo said: ‘It is Waaqa [God]...who has subjected us to the Amhara’” (De Salviac 1901, 350). According to De Salviac (1901, 8), “With the power of firearms imported from Europe, Menelik [Abyssinian warlord] began a murderous revenge.” The violent colonization of Oromia and other territories involved mass murder and slavery: “The Abyssinian, in bloody raids, operated by surprise, mowed down without pity, in the country of the Oromo population, a mournful harvest of slaves....An Oromo child [boy] would cost up to 800 francs in Cairo; an Oromo girl would well be worth two thousand francs in Constantinople” (De Salviac 1901, 28).

The Ethiopian colonial government massacred half of the Oromo population (five million out of ten million) and their leadership during its colonial expansion to Oromia (Hassen 1998). According to Alexander Bulatovich (2000: 68-69), “The dreadful annihilation of more than half of the population during the conquest took away from the Gallas [Oromo] all possibilities of thinking about any sort of uprising....Without a doubt, the Galla, with their least five million population, occupying the best land, all speaking one language, could represent a tremendous force if united.” Most Oromos who used to enjoy an egalitarian democracy known as the *gadaa* system, and who had “the main character...of love of complete independence and freedom” (Bulatovich, 2000: 65) were forced to face an impoverished life. The destruction of lives,

institutions, and liberty were aspects of Ethiopian colonial terrorism. Most Oromos were forced to face political repression. Bulatovich (2000: 68) explains about the *gadaa* administration and notes “the peaceful free way of life, which could have become the ideal for philosophers and writers of the eighteenth century, if they had known it, was completely changed. Their peaceful way of life is broken; freedom is lost; and the independent, freedom loving Gallas [Oromos] find themselves under the severe authority of the Abyssinian conquerors.”

Bulatovich (2000: 263) provides several eyewitness accounts of the destruction of several population groups by Ethiopian colonial terrorism. For instance, explaining how the Kaffa and Gimra peoples would be destroyed, on February 3, 1898, he states the following:

As far as the eye see, the valley and hills were densely settled. Smoke arose from the houses. Evidently, food was being prepared there. Cattle were returning from the pasture, and the eight marvelous white cows aroused the appetite of my traveling companions, who exclaimed the whole time, ‘Look how many cows! So White! And cows! Those are such cows! ...’ The field around was cultivated. The quiet hardworking life of a peaceful people was evident in all, and it was sad to think that tomorrow all this would be destroyed....The picture will change: the inhabitants will flee, driving their livestock and carrying their goods and children. They will, most probably be killed, wounded, and captured. Their houses will go up in a blaze, and all that will remain of them will be the hearths.

Traditionally Abyssinians destroyed their forests and environment by cutting trees. Ethiopian colonialists brought the same culture to Oromia and destroyed Oromo natural resources and the beauty of Oromia. When Alexander Bulatovich, a Russian, visited Oromia between 1896 and 1898, Menelik was consolidating Ethiopian settler colonialism, and the settlers had not yet totally destroyed the resources of the Oromo nation.

The Oromia he characterized as “flowing in milk and honey,” (Bulatovich, 2000: 12), was gradually impoverished by Amhara-Tigray settlers know as *nafxanyas* (gun holders) (Jalata, 1993: 87-89). Menelik partitioned the colonized regions including Oromia and put them under the administration of his war generals. The Oromo “lands together with their population belong to the emperor by the right of conquest” (Bulatovich, 2000: 84). Menelik established his government under the tight control of eighteen war chiefs or generals “who were completely independent in internal affairs, justice, the distribution of lands and jobs. But in all also they are absolutely under the command of the Emperor. They recognize his power and pay him tribute in the form of taxes or presents” (Bulatovich, 2000: 87-89).

The Abyssinian colonialists devastated “the forests by pulling from it the laths for their houses and [made] campfires or firewood for their dwellings. They lack[ed] the foresight to reforest or to respect the roots of trees, which would grow new off shoots. [They were] the great destructors of trees, others [accused] them of exercising their barbarity against the forests for the sole pleasure of ravaging” (De Salviac 2005, 20). The destruction of natural resources, human lives and institutions, the repression and exploitation of the surviving Oromo population went hand in hand. The Ethiopian state established settler colonialism in Oromia and developed five major types of colonial institutions, namely, slavery, the colonial landholding system, the *nafxanya-gabbar* system (semi-slavery), the collaborative class (agents of the Abyssinians), and garrison and non-garrison cities.

The Ethiopian state introduced the process of forced recruitment of labor via slavery and the *nafxanya-gabbar* (semi-slavery) system (see Holcomb and Ibssa, 1990: 135; Jalata, 2001) and expropriated almost all Oromo lands and divided up the Oromo among colonial officials and soldiers and their collaborators to force them to produce agricultural commodities and food for local consumption and an international market. The Oromo were reduced to serfs or slaves or semi-slaves and coerced to work without remuneration for the settlers, intermediaries, and the colonial state for certain days every week. Whenever they failed to provide free labor or pay taxes or tributes, the settlers enslaved their children or wives. The Ethiopian settlers continued to depopulate Oromia through slave trade until the 1930 when the Italian fascists abolished slavery in order to recruit adequate labor for their agricultural plantations in the Horn of Africa. The *nafxanya-gabbar* system was also abolished during this time through the same process.

The Ethiopian state destroyed any Oromo leadership that resisted Ethiopian colonialism, and co-opted those submissive leaders who accepted the role of intermediary in the Ethiopian colonial system. The Amhara and Tigrayan colonial settlers, their supporters, and their state developed garrison and non-garrison cities as one of their central institutions to control, suppress, and exploit the Oromo people. The repression, exploitation, and terrorism started during the reign of Menelik continued under Haile Selassie’s regime. The Haile Selassie government terrorized the Oromo of Raya-Azabo, Wallo, Hararghe, Bale and other regions because of their political and cultural resistance to the Amhara-Tigray domination. It also imprisoned, tortured or hanged prominent Oromo leaders, such as Mamo Mazamir and Haile Mariam Gamada. During the 1960s the Selassie government also banned civic organizations and musical groups.

The military regime that emerged under the leadership of Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam established a dictatorship and continued Ethiopian colonial policies. When Oromo activists and the people started to resist the military regime, the regime intensified its terrorism. In the 1980s, hundreds of Oromo nationalists were murdered or imprisoned. According to Gunnar Hasselblatt (1992, 17-19),

the military government repeatedly held mass shooting among the Oromo population, hoping to break the free, independent Oromo spirit. Sometimes a hundred, sometimes two hundred men were shot on this raised dry field...and were buried with bulldozers. Over years this procedure was repeated numerous times. When this method did not work and the Oromo population could not be forced into submission, other methods were used. Victims were made to lie down with their heads on stone, and their skulls were smashed with another stone. The...government...tried everything to consolidate its reign of terror and exploitation of Oromia...When the Oromo movement could not be quenched by shooting or by the smashing of skulls, [the government] came up with a new idea. Men's testicles were smashed between a hammer and an anvil. Three men tortured and maimed in this way are still living.

The destruction of human lives and liberty in the Ethiopian Empire under the terrorist regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam who was exceeded by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi who has massacred large numbers of Oromos and others because of their political beliefs and their ethnonational backgrounds. Successive Ethiopian regimes have engaged in state terrorism. The Tigryan-led Ethiopian government also practices state violence against the Sidama, Annuak, and Somali as a legitimate means of establishing political stability and order. Today, Ethiopian colonial settlers led by the Tigrayan-led regime have dominated the cities in Oromia and other regions, segregated the Oromo national majority in urban and rural areas, and kept them under "Ethiopian political slavery" by using the army, modern weaponry, the media, the telephone, the fax, the Internet, and other communication and information means and networks.

Using political violence, the Tigrayan authoritarian-terrorist regime has denied the Oromo and other peoples the freedom of expression, association, organization, and access to the media and information networks. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Oromo and other peoples are denied the freedom of self-expression and self-development, and are forced to provide their economic and labor resources to the Ethiopian colonizers and their supporters, and live under deplorable conditions. The Tigrayan state elites try to hide the true characteristics of the Ethiopian regime that include state-terrorism and other forms of violence that terrorize and control the colonized population groups, particularly the Oromo. While engaging in political violence in the form of

state terrorism, state rape, and hidden genocide to control the Oromo people and loot their economic resources, the Tigrayan state elite claims that they are promoting democracy, federalism, and national self-determination.

Because the Tigrayan-dominated Ethiopian government has been unable to establish internal legitimacy and ideological hegemony, it engages in terrorism and hidden genocide to protect its power. Bridget Welsh (2002: 67-68) suggests that since weak states “lack the capacity to meet the demands and rights of citizens and improve the standard of living for the majority of population,” they participate in political violence and engage in genocidal massacres in order to suppress the population groups struggling for political and economic rights. Most of the Oromo people, under the leadership of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), are determined to challenge the racist policies of this regime; as a result the Meles government focuses on the destruction and devastation of the Oromo. As Lisa Sharlach (2002: 107) attests, a politically “dominant group, frightened by what its members perceive as an onslaught of international and internal movements for democracy and socioeconomic change, harnesses the state apparatus to destroy the subordinate group together. This is genocide.” The massive killings and genocide committed on the Sheko, Mezhenger, Sidama, and Annuak, and Ogaden Somali peoples shocked some sections of the international community. In 2002, when the Sheko and Mezhenger peoples demanded their rights, the regime killed between 128 and 1,000 people. Nobody knows exactly how many people were killed since the government and the victims give different numbers. Similarly, on June 21, 2002, between 39 and 100 Sidamas were killed when government soldiers fired at 7,000 peaceful demonstrators in Hawassa (Awassa) (Jalata, 2005a: 242-243).

Again government forces and colonial settlers committed genocidal massacres on the Annuak people of Gambella in December 2003 and beginning 2004; they killed 424 people and displaced about 50, 000 people (Human Rights Watch, 2005b: 2). Currently, the regime is engaged in genocidal massacres, imprisonment, and massive human rights violations in Ogadenia and Oromia (U.S. State Department, 2009). Former prisoners have testified that their arms and legs were tied tightly together on their backs and their naked bodies were whipped. Large containers or bottles filled with water were fixed to their testicles, or if they were women, bottles or poles were pushed into their vaginas. There were prisoners who were locked up in empty steel barrels and tormented with heat in the tropical sun during the day and with cold at night. In addition prisoners were forced into pits so that fire could be made on top of them. Successive state elites and their governments have remained racist and dictatorial, and have continued to

pursue destructive policies that intensify terrorism, war, underdevelopment, and poverty (Jalata, 2000).

The Ethiopian colonial system has taken away the sovereignty of the Oromo people and others and exposed them to massive and absolute poverty by denying them their fundamental human rights and needs that Ron Shiffman (1995: 6-8) calls subsistence, protection, affection, and understanding. Most people in urban and rural areas have low levels of subsistence because they do not have adequate income, enough food, and livable homes. They do not have protection from disease since they do not have adequate access to health and medical services. They do not have protection from political violence since the Ethiopian state engages in massive human rights violations and state terrorism. Currently thousands of Oromos and persons of other nationalities are imprisoned, tortured, harassed or killed by the Meles regime because of their struggle for national self-determination and democracy (Jalata, 2005b). Although it is impossible to exactly know at this time how many Oromos have been murdered because the Meles government hides this information, the Oromia Support Group (2007, 1) reports “3,981 extra-judicial killings and 943 disappearances [euphemism for hidden murder] of civilians suspected of supporting groups opposing the government.” However, Mohammed Hassen (2001: 27) estimates that between 1992 and 2001 about fifty thousand killings and sixteen thousand disappearances (euphemism for secret killings) occurred in Oromia; he also notes that 90 percent of the killings were not reported.

Furthermore, from 2000 to 2006, the regime killed hundreds Oromo students who participated in peaceful demonstration. It also imprisoned and tortured thousands of them or expelled them from elementary and high schools and colleges (Jalata, 2007: 171). Many Oromos who were murdered by the agents of the Ethiopian government were eaten by hyenas and denied burial. The relatives of the murdered Oromos and persons of other nationalities are not allowed to cry to express their sadness according to their cultural tradition. For example, the wife of Ahmed Mohamed Kuree, a seventy years old elderly farmer, spoke on February 21, 2007 on the Voice of America (VOA), Afaan Oromo Program: “We found his prayer beads, his cloth and a single piece of his bone which the hyenas left behind after devouring the rest of his body and we took those items home. What is more, after we got home, they [government agents] condemned us for going to Gaara Suufii and for mourning. For fear of repercussions, we have not offered the customary prayer for the dead...husband by reading from the Qur’an. Justice has not been served. That is where we are today.” In 2007, the Meles militia killed twenty Oromo and let their

corpses on the Mountain of Suufi in Eastern Oromia. Ahmed Mohamed Kuree was one of these Oromo. Another Oromo, Ayisha Ali, a fourteen years old teenager, was also killed and eaten by hyena. On the same VOA program her mother said: “After we heard the rumor about the old man [Ahmed Mohamed Kuree] I followed his family to Gaara Suufii [in search of my daughter]. There we found her skirt, sweater, under wears and her hair, braided...That was all we found of my daughter remains.” These individuals were murdered by the agents of the Tigrayan-led Ethiopian regime because of their Oromoness and their religion. Of course the regime also targets Christian Oromo because of their ethnonational background.

According to Human Rights Watch (2005, 1-2), “Since 1992, security forces have imprisoned thousands of Oromo on charges of plotting armed insurrection on behalf of the OLF. Such accusations have regularly been used as a transparent pretext to imprison individuals who publicly question government policies or actions. Security forces have tortured many detainees and subjected them to continuing harassment and abuse for years after their release. That harassment, in turn has often destroyed victims’ ability to earn a livelihood and isolated them from their communities.” Since the creation of the Ethiopian Empire, the Ethiopian state has been the domain of the Amhara-Tigrayan ruling classes; successive Ethiopian ruling classes with the collaboration of Euro-American allies have effectively excluded the colonized peoples and the Ethiopian masses from decision-making positions. The racialized Ethiopian state has controlled the colonized peoples by establishing the local colonial administration in garrison towns that were built in various strategic places; it also created local intermediaries that served between the colonialists and the local population. The conquered peoples have been denied their inalienable right to self-determination and democracy. They have been denied the right to build their social, economic, cultural and organizational infrastructures.

### **The Ethiopian State as the Enemy of Peace and Development**

It took more than half of a century to create the Ethiopian Empire. Probably hundreds of wars were fought against various peoples, and several millions people perished during these wars. The phrase of Charles Tilly (1985), “war making and state making as organized crime,” clearly depicts the main role of the Ethiopian state. Wars and recurrent political violence have increased human sufferings in this empire. Successive Ethiopian regimes have depended on external powers, lacked internal political legitimacy among the colonized peoples who constitute the majority of the empire’s population, and brutalized individuals and groups through the policies and practices



of authoritarianism and state-terrorism for more than a century. Despite the fact that some Amhara-Tigrayan state elites claim that their state, history, culture, religion, and civilization are something to be proud of, Ethiopia is known for its recurrent famines, internal and external wars, backwardness, poverty, and underdevelopment.

Ethiopia has remained an empire of darkness and ignorance and the leadership coming from either Amhara or Tigrayan society has failed to fulfill the responsibilities of a modern state. Their ideological claims of the Solomonic myth and Christianity, or socialism, or democracy have resulted in the same political behavior. The Ethiopian state has been used as an instrument to enrich Abyssinian elites, maintain a compliant Abyssinian populace by means of authoritarian rule and punish those who oppose them through state-terrorism. Theoretically speaking, the legitimate state monopolizes the use of legitimate violence or physical force within its geopolitical territory by practicing the right to protect its sovereignty, citizens, internal order, and territory within the framework of the rule of law. The legitimate state depersonalizes itself as a public domain by building autonomous institutions and organizations and by making and implementing the rule of law to promote the wellbeing and security of its citizens. Michiel S de Vries (2001: 391) identifies the state as “the organization responsible for the security of life and when this was accomplished it became increasingly responsible for securing the quality of life by creating a set of institutions profitable for the stable economic, political, cultural and demographic developments within its territory.”

Contrary to these principles, successive Ethiopian regimes have imposed their political power on their respective subjects through authoritarianism and the barrel of the gun, violating the rule of law and the principles of social contract. The survival of these regimes has depended on political violence and assistance from global powers. Consequently, the Ethiopian state has remained the organ of political repression, oppression, terrorism, exploitation, and impoverishment, and, hence it has lacked internal legitimacy among the majority of its citizens. Successive Ethiopian regimes have suppressed competing political and cultural narratives and discourses through the Abyssinization/Christianization project. Although there has been regime change through palace intrigue and violence, Ethiopian political and cultural traditions have preserved colonial arrangements and tyrannical political practices and resisted changes in political norms, rules, and practices.

The Amhara-Tigrayan state elites have imposed a cruel, deadly, and hopeless system on the Oromo and other colonized peoples and with the support of big powers, the World Bank,

the IMF, and the United Nations have attacked the life and liberty of various peoples and impoverished them. Bad and corrupt governments such as that of Ethiopia have destroyed the possibility of development in poor countries with the support of big powers and international organizations. They have violated human rights by preventing the development of democracy. Referring to democracy William Easterly (2006: 117) notes, “According to the simplest view of democracy, an open society with a free press, free speech, freedom of assembly, and political rights for dissidents is a way to ensure good government. Free individuals will expose any predatory behavior by bad governments, and vote them out of office.” Easterly thoroughly describes how Western governments have created and maintained bad governments in the Rest and contributed to existence of poverty and human rights violations.

Although there have been reformist and leftist Ethiopian political elites who have attempted to bring about some political changes, most Abyssinian communities and elites have opposed to any kind of political and social change initiated by the colonized population groups. The Abyssinian communities have informal networks within the Ethiopian government and have repeatedly suppressed attempts to bring about fundamental political change in the colonized areas. C. Stone (1989: 6) notes that governments are based on “the informal arrangements by which public bodies and private interests function together in order to be able to make and carry out governing decisions.” Although there have been contradictions in the colonizing Ethiopian political structure, Ethiopian communities and elites have collaborated in maintaining settler colonialism to protect their political and economic interests in the colonized regions. Since the behavior of the Abyssinian political elites and structures have been shaped by the Abyssinian political culture, the Ethiopian political system has remained authoritarian and willing to use state-terrorism thus failing to advance peaceful and meaning of socioeconomic development (see Hagos, 1995). The Ethiopian state is a failed state because it has been unable to secure internal legitimacy from the peoples it controls, failing to provide security and the improvement of their well-being. As Jennifer Milliken and Keith Krause (2002: 764) note, “state failure is causally linked to increased and widespread humanitarian suffering, regional instability, and transnational threats of international organized crime and terrorism.”

Although three successive governments emerged after that of Menelik, the Ethiopian state has remained personalized, ethnicized/racialized, dependent on big global power, and never become the domain of public power. These regimes have imposed their political authorities through repression in order to have absolute control over the means of compulsion (the state)

and the means of consumption (productive resources). Because of the lack of accountability by successive Ethiopian governments, the produce of the people has not been properly channeled toward development. The state elites have used available resources for conspicuous consumption and the consolidation of the position of the state. Because of the backwardness of the economy, the economic surplus is very limited. Hence there is a life-and-death struggle over its appropriation. Accessibility to state power is the major channel through which the surplus is siphoned off from actual producers. That is why there has been no peaceful transference of power, and the struggle for political power is violent. Since these regimes have not represented the peoples whom they ruled, they have failed to establish popular accountability. The Amhara-Tigray state elites that have dominated the means of compulsion and the means of consumption have engaged in plunder and accumulation of wealth and capital with the help of the imperial interstate system. According to M. Mamdani (1986:47) “state connection is a necessary precondition for membership in the African bourgeoisie gives a life-and-death character to the political struggle within it. A political position does not simply reinforce a pre-existing economic position or open up new opportunities where old ones already existed; it is in fact the very foundation of wealth.”

The governments' failure to invest effectively the available surplus in development of productive forces has left the peoples culturally, technically, economically, and political backward. Failure to invest in the development of productive forces, internal and external wars, farmers' discouragement due to expropriation of their grains and animals, and the conspicuous consumption of the ruling classes have slowed the introduction of technical innovation in the agricultural production system. Since the Ethiopian state and the imperial interstate system, spearheaded by the U.S., have refused to recognize and provide an alternative solution to the complex processes of decolonization, self-determination and multinational democracy, today we witness conflicts, recurrent famines, wars, social dislocation and crises in Ethiopia. While most of the people are facing abject poverty, diseases, famines, and illiteracy, the Tigrayan-led Ethiopian regime continues to engage in low-level wars against the liberation fronts of Oromia, Ogadenia, Sidama, and others, while intensifying its war of aggression against Somalia. This regime might also go to war with Eritrea destroying thousands of lives and spending millions of dollars as it did between 1998 and 2000.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

The old policy of building a state on the basis of one ethnonational hegemony in a multinational society, the blind acceptance of the sovereignty of the racialized state without recognizing the rights of the subjugated peoples, the idea of promoting the politics of order at the cost of democracy and self-determination, the lack of vision to build a multinational democracy based on ethnocultures and universal values of humanism, democracy, self-determination equality, social justice, and progress are contributing to the intensification of political conflicts, state decay and failure, underdevelopment, and social problems in Ethiopia. If the Ethiopian Empire is to be transformed into a viable, self-sustaining, and peaceful country, establishing a multinational democratic state that will have internal political legitimacy must be the first priority. Internal legitimacy can only be achieved through decolonization, national self-determination, and popular sovereignty which require the dismantling of the current racialized/ethnicized Ethiopian state and by replacing it by a state that will be a public domain, establishing and practicing the rule of law. We are afraid that if the existing political problems are not fairly and democratically solved quickly, the result may be genocidal conflicts like those in Rwanda or the former Yugoslavia. Before it is too late progressive intellectuals, democrats, concerned political forces, and the international community must begin to address and solve these complex and difficult political problems.

Alternatively, if the Amhara-Tigrayan elites continue to be interested in maintaining their racialized/ethnicized and colonial state, the national liberation movements of the colonized nations should pursue a common political agenda of liberation from the Ethiopian state and the establishment of one or more independent, multinational, democratic states by implementing the processes of decolonization, self-determination, and popular sovereignty. A just and durable peace, requires either the replacement the Ethiopian authoritarian-terrorist regime by a legitimate, multinational, democratic state and full decolonization, or allowing these nations full sovereignty. Without a new democratic paradigm that will achieve internal legitimacy by allowing the dominated classes, social groups, and ethnonations to have genuine representation within a state that they can form and change, the existing state, continental, and international political structures are inadequate to address and provide a solution for the complex political and economic problems in Ethiopia. The majority of the peoples in Ethiopia are at a political crossroads. The social and cultural systems that traditionally satisfied social and material needs

has been broken up, and they have yet to establish state or states that can be responsive to their social and economic needs.

The world community, nongovernmental, and regional organizations, except for intervening during a famine disaster and feed those populations who are starved, have not helped the colonized peoples of Ethiopia. They have not taken preventive action. They only respond when the media start to report the existence of famine, genocide, and/or massive human rights violations. These acute problems in Ethiopia have yet to get the attention of the world community. That is why peoples like the Oromo, Sidama, Ogaden-Somali, Annuak and others continue to suffer under the authoritarian-terrorist regime of Meles Zenawi that practices hidden genocide. The Ethiopian state is failed and it is on the verge of collapse, surviving only by depending on major world powers and by practicing authoritarianism, terrorism, and hidden genocide.

## References

- Agyeman-Duah, Baffour. "United States Military Assistance Relationship with Ethiopia, 1953-77: Historical and Theoretical Analysis," (Ph.D. dissertation, University Of Denver, 1984).
- Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch/Africa, 1997.
- Bailey, Glen. "An Analysis of the Ethiopian Revolution," (M.A. Thesis, Carleton University, 1980).
- Bartles, Lambert. *Oromo Religion*, (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1983).
- Baxter, P.T. W. "Ethiopia's Unacknowledged Problem: The Oromo," *African Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 30 (1978).
- Beckman B. "Imperialism and the 'National Bourgeoisie,'" *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 22, 1982a, pp. 5-19.
- "State and Capitalist development in Nigeria," *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 23, 1982b, pp. 37-51.
- Besteman, Catherine. *Unraveling Somalia: Race, Violence, and the Legacy of Slavery*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1999).
- Budge, A. Wallis, (TR.). *The Queen of Sheba and Her only Son Menyelek I*, (London, 1932).
- Bulatovich, Alexander. 2000. *Ethiopia through Russian Eyes: Country in Transition 1896-189*, translated by Richard Seltzer, (Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 2000).
- Clay, Janson, S. Steingraber and P.Niggli. *The Spoils of famine*, (Cambridge: Cultural Survival, Inc., 1988).
- Crummey, D. "State and Society: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Ethiopia," *Modes of Production in Africa: The Precolonial Era*, D. Crummey and C. C. Steinart (eds.), (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1981).
- De Salviac, Martial. *An Ancient People Great African Nation: The Oromo*, translated. From the original French edition of 1901 by Ayalew Kanno, 2005.
- De Vries, Michiel S. "The Attack on the State: A Comparison of Arguments," *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 67(3), pp. 389-414.
- Easterly, William. *The White Man's Burden*, (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006).
- Gamst, Frederick C. "Peasantries and Elites without Urbanism: the Civilization of Ethiopia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 12, 4 (1970).
- Greenfield, Richard and M. Hassen. "Interpretation of Oromo Nationality," *Horn of Africa*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1980).
- Hailu, Lemma. "The Politics of Famine in Ethiopia," *Review of African Political Economy*, 33 (1985).

- Hagos, Tecola W. *Democratization? Ethiopia (1991-1994): A Personal View*, (Cambridge, MA: Khepere Publishers, 1995).
- Halliday, F. and M. Molyneux. *The Ethiopian Revolution*, (London: Verso, 1981).
- Hasselblatt, Gunnar. "After 14 years: return to Addis Ababa – and to a free Oromia," *A Travel Diary*, December 1991—January 1992.
- Hassen. Mohammed. "Is Genocide against the Oromo in Ethiopia Possible," *Paper Presented at the Fourth International Biennial Conference of the Association of Genocide Scholars*, Radisson Hotel, Minneapolis, Minnesota, June 10, 2001.
- Henok: *Journal of Historical and Philosophical Thought* 2 (August, 1991), pp. 63-80.
- Hiwet, Addis. *Ethiopia: from Autocracy to Revolution*, Occasional Publication No. 1, Review of African Political Economy, (London, 1975).
- Hoben, Allen. "Social Stratification in Traditional Amhara Society," *Social Stratification in Africa*, Arthur Tuden and Leonard Plotnicov (eds.), (New York: the Free Press, 1970).
- Land Tenure among the Amhara of Ethiopia: The Dynamics of Cognatic Descent*, (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1973).
- "Social Anthropology and Development Planning – a Case Study in Ethiopian Land Reform Policy," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 10/ 4, 1972).
- Holcomb, Bonnie K. and S. Ibssa. 1990. *The Invention of Ethiopia: The Making of Dependent Colonial State in Northeast Africa*, (Trenton, NJ: The Red Sea Press).
- Human Rights Watch. *Suppressing Dissent: Human Rights Abuses and Political Repression in Ethiopia's Oromia Region*, May 2005 Vol. 17, No.7(A).
- "Ethiopia: Overview of Human Rights Issues," <http://www.hrw.org/legacy/english/docs/2005/01/13/>, ethiop9833, (2005), pp.1-2
- Korn, David A. *Ethiopia, the United States and the Soviet Union*, (Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986).
- Kumsaa, Kuwee. 2006. "Oromo Religion," Oromo Communities Global Network website: <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Fields/2379/oreligion.html> Last accessed July 2006.
- Jalata, Asafa. *Oromia & Ethiopia: State Formation and Ethnonational Conflict, 1968-1992*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993). It was expanded and reprinted in 2005a by the Red Sea Press.
- "Poverty, Powerlessness and the Imperial Interstate System in the Horn of Africa," *Disaster and Development in the Horn of Africa*, ed. John Sorenson, (New York: St. Martin' Press, 1995), pp. 31-48.

Fighting Against the Injustice of the State and Globalization: Comparing the African American and Oromo Movements, (New York: Palgrave, 2001). 2000.

“U.S.-Sponsored Ethiopian-Democracy and State Terrorism,” *Crisis and Terror in the Horn of Africa: Autopsy of Democracy, Human Rights and Freedom*, Pietro Toggia, Pat Lauderdale and Abebe Zegeye, (Burlington, Ashgate, 2000), pp. 64-89.

“Ethno-nationalism and the global ‘Modernising’ Project,” *Nations & Nationalism*, Volume 7, Part 1, July 2001, pp.385-405.

*Oromummaa: Oromo Culture, Identity & Nationalism* (Atlanta: Oromia Publish Company, 2007).

“State Terrorism and Globalization: The Cases of Ethiopia and Sudan,” *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, Vol. 46, nos. 1-2, 2005b).

Jones, A.H.M. and Elizabeth Monroe. *A History of Ethiopia*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

Legesse, Asmarom. *Oromo Democracy: An Indigenous African Political System*, (Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 2006).

MacMichael, H.A. *A History of the Arabs in the Sudan, Vol. I*, (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1967).

Mamdani, M. “Peasants and Democracy in Africa,” *New Left Review*, March/April, 1986.

Markakis, John. “Ethnic Conflict & the State in the Horn of Africa,” *Ethnicity and Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, edited by Katsuyoshi Fukui and John Markakis, (London: James Currey Ltd., 1994).

*Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974).

Melbaa, Gadaa. *Oromia: An Introduction*, (Finfinne, 1980).

Michels, J.W. “The Axumite Kingdom: A Settlement Archaeological Perspective,”

Milliken, Jennifer and Keith Krause. “State Failure, State Collapse, and State Reconstruction: Concepts, Lessons and Strategies,” *Development and Change*, November 2002, Vol. 33(5), pp. 753-774.

Murray, John. “Abyssinia under Menelik and After,” *The Quarterly Review*, Vol. 237 (1922).

Oliverio, Annamari. “The State of Injustice: The Politics of Terrorism and the Production of Order,” *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, Vol. XXXVIII, number 1-2, June 1997, pp. 48-63.

*The State of Terror*, (New York: SUNY Press, 1999).



- Ottaway, David and Marina. *Ethiopia: Empire in Revolution*, (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1978).
- Pankhurst, Richard. "Menelik and Utilisation of Foreign Skills in Ethiopia," *The Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. v, No. 1 (1967), pp. 29-86.
- The Ethiopians: A History*, (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2001).
- The Ethiopian Borderlands: Essays in Regional History from Ancient Times to the End of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, (Trenton, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 1997).
- Pausewang, Siegfried. "Land, Market, and Rural Society, Ethiopia 1840-1976," *Proceedings of the first International Conference on Ethiopian Studies*, April 13-16, 1978.
- Pollock, Sue. "Ethiopia- Human Tragedy in the Making: Democracy or Dictatorship?" The Oromia Support Group, 1996;
- "Politics and Conflict: Participation and Self-determination," *Ethiopia: Conquest and the Quest for Freedom and Democracy*, edited by Seyoum Y. Hameso, T. Trueman, and T. E. Erena, (London: TSC Publications, 1997), pp. 81-110.
- Press, Robert M. "U.S. Relief Program to Defy Ethiopia," *The Washington Post*, May 31, 1988).
- Schwab, Peter. *Haile Selassie I Ethiopia's Lion of Judah*, (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1979).
- Sharlach, Lisa. "State Rape: Sexual Violence as Genocide," *Violence and Politics: Globalization's Paradox*. Eds. Kenton Worcester, Sally Avery Bermanzohn, and Mark Ungar, (New York: Routledge, 2002).
- Shaw, T.M. "Ethnicity as the Resilient Paradigm for Africa: From 1960s to 1980s," *Development and Change*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (1986), 587-606.
- Spencer, Meredith. "Structural Analysis and the Queen of Sheba," *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Ethiopian Studies*, April 13-16, 1978.
- Shiffman, Ron. "Urban Poverty - The Global Phenomenon of Poverty and Social Marginalization in Our Cities: Facts and Strategies, 1995, <http://www.picced.org/advocacy/poverty.htm>.
- Schraeder, Peter J. *United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa: Incrementalism, crisis, and change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- Strauss, Peter L., (IR.). *The Fetha Nagast (The Law of the Kings)*, (Addis Ababa: HSIU, 1968).
- Stone, Clarence N. *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta 1946-1988*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989).
- The Oromia Support Group*. 1996, 1997, 2007, series.

Tamrat, Tadesse. "A Short Note on the Traditions of Pagan Resistance to the Ethiopian Church (14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries)," *The Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. x, 1(1972).

*Church and State in Ethiopia*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

Tilly, Charles. "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," *Bringing the State Back In*, Eds. Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

The Economist. "Ethiopia: Federal Sham," August 1, 1997.

Trimingham, J. Spencer. *Islam in Ethiopia*, (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1965).

Trueman, Trevor. "Democracy or dictatorship," *Ethiopia: Conquest and the Quest for Freedom and Democracy*. Eds. Seyoum Y. Hameso, T. Trueman, and T. E. Erena, (London: TSC Publications, 1997), *ibid*, pp. 141-150.

U.S. State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and labor, 2008 Human Rights Reports: Ethiopia, 2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, February 25, 2009.

Venkataram, K. "Foreign Policy of Theodore II of Ethiopia: an Interpretation," *TransAfrican Journal of History*, Vol. iii, Nos 1 & 2 (1973).

Welsh, Bridget. "Globalization, Weak States, and Death Toll in East Asia," *Violence and Politics: Globalization's Paradox*. Eds. Kenton Worcester, Sally Avery Bermanzohn, and Mark Ungar, (New York: Routledge, 2002).

Wolde-Mariam, Mesfin. *Rural Vulnerability to Famine in Ethiopia, 1958-1977*, (Ghaziabad, U.P.: Vikas Publishing House PVT Ltd., 1984).

"The Socioeconomic Consequences of Famine," *Challenging Rural Poverty*, ed. Fasil G. Kiros, (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1985).

Young, Crawford. *The Rising Tide of Cultural Pluralism: The Nation-State at Bay?* (Madison: WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1993).

## **TRANSFORMING THE OROMO NEWS MEDIA INTO THE OROMO NATIONAL INSTITUTION OF PUBLIC OPINION**

Habtamu Dugo

### 1. Introduction

This article will attempt to critically analyze the enormous powers that the Ethiopian government and the global media conglomerates are exerting to control the media in order to homogenize global and local public opinions in this century of heightened conflict, human strife and violence in Oromia, Ethiopia and the wider Horn of Africa. I will apply Herman and Chomsky's "*Propaganda Model*" and its five essential elements as a theoretical model<sup>1</sup>. The article uses a wide range of relevant statistical and financial data to support the proposed study. It also draws on Jürgen Habermas' definitions of public opinion and the press<sup>1</sup>.

If statistical data point in the direction of my argument that the Oromo public opinion—news and information—have been crushed and silenced between the colossal forces of media conglomeration and government control of the media, then I will examine whether or not new media, or more specifically the Internet, can be transformed into viable press institutions that can efficiently tell the stories of the people of Oromia, Ethiopia and the Horn region. It will provide solutions and strategies for gathering, transmitting and archiving information in Oromia's setting of conflict and violence.

### 2. The Propaganda Model

The propaganda model explains the broad range of the mainstream media's behavior and performance by their corporate character and integration into the political economy of dominant economic system (Herman and Chomsky, 2002: xii). For the purpose of this article, I will use the summaries Herman and Chomsky (2002:2) provide. They spell out the following five fundamental elements of the model or set of news "filters":

- (1) the size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth and profit orientation of the dominant media firms;
- (2) advertising as the primary income source of mass media;
- (3) The reliance of the media on information provided by government, business, and "experts" funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power;
- (4) "flak" as a means of disciplining the media; and
- (5) "anti communism" [today, anti-terrorism] as a national religion and control mechanism.

The authors argue that the elite domination of the media and the marginalization of views of dissidents happen so naturally to the extent that even professional media workers persuade themselves that they select, interpret and present the news “objectively” on the basis of professional news value.

The application of this model to the investigation of media problems in Ethiopia, a third world country under the control and monopoly of an undemocratic and tyrannical Ethiopian People’s Democratic Revolutionary Front (EPRDF), is relevant and current. In the later part of this paper, the application of the elements will serve to explicate the predicament or the enigma among the Oromo and other oppressed people in Ethiopia: “why, despite a long history of organized dissidence and social movement for justice since early 1970s, has the outcry of the oppressed people of the region earned less, or largely, no global attention?”

In conjunction with the propaganda model, the study will allude to the concept of “public opinion and public sphere” Jürgen Habermas provides. Habermas argues the mass media’s functions have shifted from their normative role of publicity to platforms of advertising. In other words, the mass media have seized their original function of being democratic and participatory platforms; they slipped into the tight grips of corporations and governments, who feel threatened if they leave such crucial media in the hands of ordinary citizens. Corporations and governments believe the media are too essential to leave them uncontrolled as the media serve as instruments that can help the public strip off the economic and political influences of the powerful. The press—preeminent institution of the public sphere—has seen drastic transformation in this regard. Because of the commercialization of the press, the threshold between the circulation of commodity and the exchange of communications between the members of the public was leveled<sup>1</sup>. “Public sphere” means forums and media, where private people gather to discuss, debate and challenge established governmental or commercial systems. The people’s public use of their reason (*öffentliches Rasonnement*) is central to a thriving public sphere<sup>1</sup>.

### 3. Media Conglomerates, Government and Vanishing Public Sphere

#### 3.1 Size and Ownership as the First Filter

This refers to the first of element of the model about the size, ownership and profit orientation of media. Despite the illusive appearance of independent press in Ethiopia since EPRDF grabbed power 1992, the suppression of dissident information and opinion via media ownership have taken two forms: government control of the media and global market forces' control of media and information.

Kallachaa Dubbii, in a *Sudan Tribune* article titled “Why the Pit is a Bull: the Threat of Tigrean Nationalism”<sup>1</sup> criticizes the Ethiopian ruling party’s control of the military, the economy and the media. Dubbii writes that the hallmark of EPRDF is entrenched cultures of graft, ethnic-favoritism and discrimination against the politically un-represented majority of people in Ethiopia. He identifies two strong factors that link the ruling EPRDF’s Tigrean People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) to political power and shape its capacity to destabilize the opposition—its control of the military and economy.

These factors Dubbii discusses are translated into the government control of almost all sectors of communication in Ethiopia. Established in 1995 as a relief NGO, The endowment Fund for the Rehabilitation of Tigray (EFFORT) has become the conglomerate that dominates the financial sectors of the country as whole with starting capital of Birr 2.7 billion-then just under US \$ 1 billion. Its assets and capital currently remain undisclosed to the public in the country for fear of outrage from repressed nationalities<sup>1</sup>. The group EFFORT itself brags on its official website about the economic control it has in Ethiopia: “EFFORT’s companies are the leaders in Ethiopian market.”<sup>1</sup>

It is an indisputable fact that the Ethiopian government and its cronies own and control all-telecommunications, including the media, advertizing, printing, news agencies and information centers. My visit to the Ethiopian Ministry of Information’s website to obtain statistical data on the breakdown of media ownership in the country yielded no result other than a Trojan computer virus attack that my McAfee Anti-Virus detected and warned me about.

Within the first filter, global media conglomerates<sup>1</sup> are the second factor that contributes to the homogenization and suppression of public opinion and information about abusive activities of repressive Horn of African regimes including Ethiopia. The concentrated ownership of the

media poses a greater threat to press freedom in developed capitalist economies than in autocratic third world countries. However, the conglomerates' collaboration with the rogue ruling powers in the third world further shatters the possibility of exposing to the West the atrocities the government commits against the Oromo people and other nationalities.

Robert McChesney, a well established authority of global media, argues that the global commercial-media system is radical in that it respects no tradition or custom if it stands in the way of profit. More importantly, McChesney states this:

Because the media giants are significant beneficiaries of the current social structure around the world, and any upheaval in property or social relations—particularly to the extent that it reduces the power of business—is not in their interest.<sup>1</sup>

According to Global Issues, *Mother Jones* magazine reports that by the end of 2006, there are only 8 giant media companies dominating the US Media, from which most people get their news and information<sup>1</sup>:

- (1) Disney (market value: \$72.8 billion).
- (2) AOL-Time Warner (market value: \$90.7 billion).
- (3) Viacom (market value: \$53.9 billion).
- (4) General Electric (owner of NBC, market value: \$390.6 billion).
- (5) News Corporation (market value: \$56.7 billion).
- (6) Yahoo! (market value: \$40.1 billion).
- (7) Microsoft (market value: \$ 306.8 billion).
- (8) Google (market value: \$154.6 billion) .

These are first-tier media conglomerates. News and information on violence, human rights abuses and ethnic-cleansing in Ethiopia may not appeal to these companies because of such news is not in their market interests. Market interests pose serious threats on press freedom in first world economies no less than repressive regimes pose threats to the press in Africa. What the above data also means is that a handful of companies control the global media, making it harder for start-ups with small budgets to enter the market and survive.

The role of media conglomerates raises questions even in American democracy. In 1990, Herman and Chomsky (2002: xiii) only twenty three firms occupied dominant ownership position in America. Their interpretation of numbers meant that two dozen firms control nearly the entirety of media experienced by US citizens. The current and the previous conglomerate players own different kinds of media; i.e., magazines, television networks, movies, music, books, theme parks, internet and sports among others.

### 3.2 Advertising as the Second Filter

Advertising as the primary income source for the commercial media places another enormous filter on news, information and opinion from civil and political organizations leading pro-freedom and democracy social movements in the Horn of Africa. It is rarely in the interest of media conglomerates in the west to air dissident news, opinion and information.

The primary purpose of media conglomerates is selling ads, without offending advertisers and driving away audience by airing uncomfortable<sup>1</sup>, gruesome and distressing stories of human rights abuses and violence in countries far away.

The following data shows how the year 2007's ad spending by leading advertisers in the United States was split by medium<sup>1</sup>.

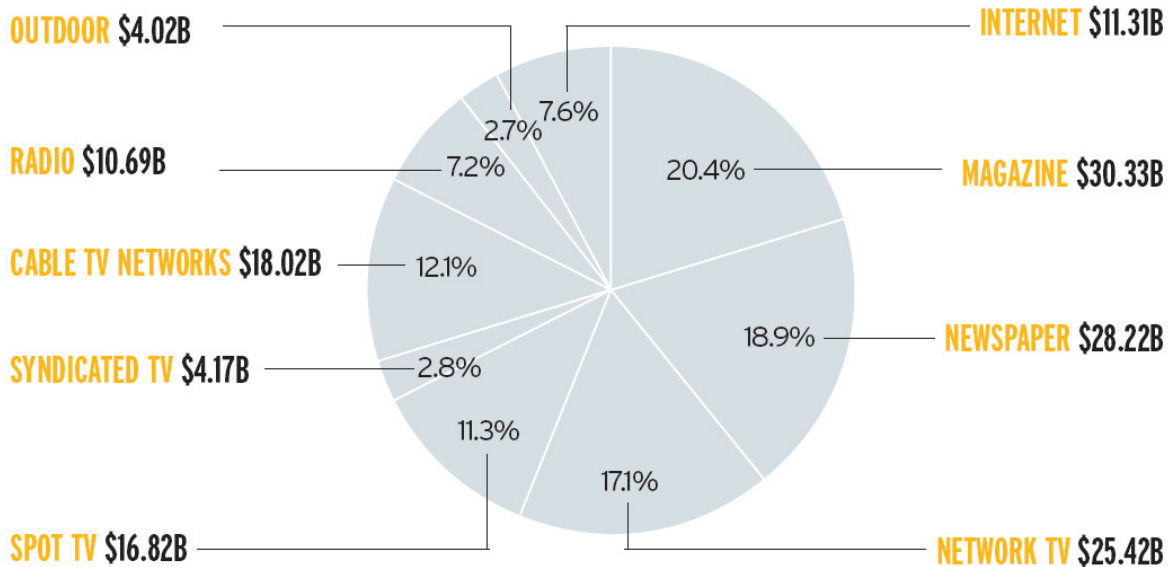


Fig. 1

According to *Advertising Age*, the total U.S. measured media spending for all advertisers, including the 100 leading national advertisers, increased by 2% to \$149 billion in 2007. The impact of this mega spending narrows or even worse annihilates chances of an ordinary citizens' freedom of expression even in established democracies.

As Herman and Chomsky precisely put<sup>1</sup>, “advertisers do not like the public sphere, where audiences are relatively small, upsetting controversy takes place, and the settings are not ideal for selling goods”. The authors argue that the advertisers’ preference of entertainment over controversial news and information is the basis for the erosion of public sphere under systems of commercial media.

Advertisers and the media choose entertainment because it has the merit not only of being better suited for helping sell goods; it is also an effective vehicle for transmitting hidden ideological messages that intend to integrate individuals into the institutional structures of the larger society.

Data is very revealing about the unequivocal threats to press freedom the global commercial media are posing. Tragic stories of governmental oppression of Oromo people will have clearly no place in today’s harsh and greedy global capitalism.

Nonetheless, there is a way to overcome this problem. There is saying among media professionals, “if it bleeds, it leads.” That means, gross graphic images appeal to media consumers. Using sad images of blood and tears attracts more media audience, who maybe fascinated with violence. For the media, increase in audience means selling more advertising and therefore greater profits. Stories which would not be considered for publication suddenly become newsworthy if accompanied by photos. Attempts should be made to acquire more photos and tapes.

### 3.3 Sourcing Media News as the Third Filter

The mass media are drawn into symbiotic relationship with powerful sources of information by economic necessity and reciprocity of interest. This is particularly holds for the client Ethiopian regime, which is friendly viewed in the West and kept in power by misappropriated donor funds.

When major social, economic or political stories break in Ethiopia, more often than not, the Western media heavily rely on a few government officials<sup>1</sup> who can be identified by names. For instance, the Voice of America and the BBC rush to easily available government sources such as the PM Meles Zenawi or Bereket Simon, Ethiopia’s communications minister and high adviser to



Zenawi. Government officials like Bereket Simon do nothing more or less than defending the tyrannical regime or engaging in denial or blame games or allegations and counter-allegations with opposition. This not only contributes to the total neglect of the peoples suffering oppressions in the country, but it also exposes the people to annoying double propaganda of Ethiopia as well as the West.

The reason for western media's selection of government sources in Ethiopia over dissidents has less to do with the ignorance or naiveté of Western media and journalists about the abusive nature of the regime in Addis Ababa than their deliberate attempt to keep the symbiotic relationship of status quo with the powerful sources of information, which is in their market interest. Sourcing, therefore, switches lights off on Horn of African peoples already in the dark of information and news blackout. Information, images and symbols showing ethnic-cleansing, state-sponsored inter-tribal conflicts are tightly controlled by the regime from leaking out to the international community.

#### 3.4 Flak as the Fourth Filter

“Flak” refers to negative response to a media statement or program<sup>1</sup>. It may take the form of letters, telegrams, phone call, petitions, and lawsuits. In Ethiopia, the government is a major producer of flak on its media, especially in response to the major press releases and reports by international human rights and press freedom organizations. It usually does this to deny reports implicating it in war-crimes, ethnic-cleaning and human rights abuses. The regime is often at logger-heads with Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Committee to Protect Journalists and more recently with US Department of State. Through state-controlled Ethiopian Television and Radio Ethiopia calls reports from these organizations “lies”, “manufactured”, “baseless” because the government asserts the reports are collected from opposition parties and refugees in neighboring countries and the transnational Oromian or Ethiopian Diaspora.

The best example of such a flak was a documentary film the government produced to dismiss the U.S Department of State's 2008 report on human rights<sup>1</sup>. It called it “lies” and recruited a corpus of “actors” who claimed they were the individuals identified in the U.S State Department's report and that they were neither imprisoned nor killed. This was to make the case that the report

was false and that the individuals mentioned in there did not exist. The Ethiopian television dedicated several hours-long dramatized or acted documentary films to reject the report.

“Planting evidence” is another form of flak the Ethiopian government usually produces prior to raids on private homes in towns and rural areas. The government security personnel invade homes and place weapons, ammunitions and opposition flags and film that and present on the state media. Then the individuals are accused of supporting and storing arms for Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Ogaden Liberation Front and more recently for Ginbot7, all operating in the most disenfranchised regions of the country such as Ogaden and Oromia in the south.

### 3.5 “Anti-terrorism” as Bargaining Chip and Control Mechanism

Today, anti-terrorism ideology has gradually replaced anti-communism as a news and information filter nationally and internationally. This filter has been effectively applied by the Ethiopian government, which has been leveraging its alliance with the west on war on terror in the Horn of Africa. Since 2006, Ethiopia has been involved in major anti-terrorism wars with Somalia, ousting Islamist forces from Mogadishu<sup>1</sup>. What is significant is that Zenawi’s EPRDF has managed to use Somalia as “bargaining chip” to fend off Western criticism of his government’s human rights abuses within own country<sup>1</sup>.

Christ Flaherty, a US film maker who filmed his documentary ‘*Migration of Beauty*’ in Ethiopia observes that Ethiopians have what he called “generational fear” because of a long history of government violence. Flaherty says this regarding Zenawi’s use of Somalia as bargaining chip<sup>1</sup>:

News coming from Somalia gets grimmer by the day and the Zenawi-led government is the only one that appears to support our [US] interests in the region. In fact, the Ethiopian government makes this very clear to our elected officials. In my view, it is perhaps *the biggest bargaining chip Zenawi can leverage* (emphasis added).

In an interview with the World Association of Newspapers (WAN), Habtamu Dugo pointed out that despite Ethiopian government rhetoric, press freedom violations continue in Ethiopia and particularly in the vast oppressed regions of Oromia and south Ethiopia<sup>1</sup>. Press freedom is concern for the June 2010 elections, which is going to legitimize the ruling regime again. Dugo also explains that “anti-terrorism” is a new ideology that the Ethiopian government has adopted and manipulated in order to intensify national repression and to totally squash opposition. “The

anti terrorism bill can also be a tool for the EPRDF to keep a tight reign on anyone opposed to them”, stated Dugo.

The terrorism law as a ploy to appear compliant to Western desire is planned to be a great tool that Ethiopia will use to shut down any dissenting opinions and debates on political, economic and social issues. An article by Agence France- Presse explicates the implications of the law for press freedom quoting the following clause: “ Whoever writes, edits, prints, publishes, publicizes, disseminates, shows, makes to be heard any promotional statements encouraging...terrorists acts is punishable with rigorous imprisonment from 10-20 years.” WAN’s African Press Network states that the clause can be used to imprison journalists who criticize the government, by interpreting their words as “encouraging terrorist acts.”

Overall, as expected, the application of the propaganda model to this study helped to explain how the Ethiopian government and global media conglomerates have crushed between themselves the news, information and opinions originating from the disenfranchised populace in Oromia, Ethiopia and the Horn. Most of the violence and rights abuses still remain largely unrecorded and unarchived in Oromia, Ogadenia and other conflict scenes in the Horn.

Herman and Chomsky have terms “worthy” and “unworthy” victims to describe the kind of situation we observe in the Ethiopia. They talk about the media’s differential treatment of victims of enemy states and those of US client states. They predict victims of worthy sates will be found “worthy” and will be subject to more intense and indignant coverage than those victimized by the US and US client states, who are implicitly “unworthy.”<sup>1</sup> This trend is consistent with the global media’s preferential and biased treatment of Ethiopia’s regime—a US client state—where as opposition views and views from political and civil society organizations, leading the social movements for genuine freedom and democracy in the country are downplayed and ignored. Such coverage has left the larger Ethiopian public in a deep state of mistrust and disillusionment about the almost every institution in the country as well as the global media themselves. A Gallup survey finds that few Ethiopians are confident in their institutions.<sup>1</sup>

The survey finds that the participatory politics prompted the lowest level of trust, as only 13% of Ethiopians have confidence in the honesty of elections. It further points out that Ethiopians’

level of trust in their national government, judiciary, and the honesty of elections is lower than the regional medians for sub-Saharan Africa by roughly 30%. Despite what data indicate, the yearning of the peoples in Ethiopia for genuine freedom and democracy is under reported or ignored as outcries from “unworthy victims” by the global market forces for profit purposes and western governments for strategic reasons of the war on terror in the Horn.

#### 4. The Promise the Internet does/ does not Hold

The preceding sections of this paper have attempted to delineate and analyze how government and the global media conglomerates have systematically and subtly silenced or filtered independent or dissident news, information and public opinions on major national and international issues. In essence, the Ethiopian government and global media conglomerates have seriously weakened the “public sphere”, which is defined as the array of places and forums in which matters important to democratic community and information relevant to intelligent citizen participation is provided<sup>1</sup>.

This section examines the promise that the Internet does/does not hold to reverse or maintain the filters on information imposed by government control and the global media conglomerates.

If you look back at figure 1, you will see that the Internet is becoming one of the fastest growing platforms of advertising, generating total ad revenue of 7% (\$11.31 billion), compared to radio 7.2 % (\$10.69 billion). The figure for newspapers on the same variable stands at 18.9 % (28.22 billion), which is higher than the internet, but according to data from Advertising Age , Internet growth edged up +15.9%, whereas newspapers’ advertising revenue earning declined by -5.1%. This is to argue that internet has been reasonably hailed as the news communications medium taking over the traditional media, including radio, newspapers and even television. However, obviously media consumers of third world countries like Ethiopia suffer from severe technological infrastructural underdevelopment and digital divide. The Internet also presupposes knowledge and skills, the ability to afford computers and the ability to pay fees to service providers<sup>1</sup>. Despite these shortcomings, globally the Internet has proved to allow the transmission and availability of enormous amounts of information among the Oromo other ethnic Diasporas from Ethiopia living in economically well-off countries.

Among some media scholars, journalists and activists there has been a widely held view, for at least two decades, that the internet is a venue for the expression of diverse points of views and information as opposed to government and market controlled media.

Some researchers advance the idea that “the Internet and new communications technologies are breaking the corporate stranglehold on journalism and opening an unprecedented era of interactive democratic media”. Herman and Chomsky acknowledge importance and truthfulness of roles the Internet has played in effectively increasing individual and group networking.<sup>1</sup>

The internet has also been viewed as a tool that can enhance democratic values and understanding around the world; and it successfully accomplished that in some parts of the globe<sup>1</sup> in undemocratic countries.

Nevertheless, as Danny Schechter in *Global Issues* points out the content on Internet is not very diverse, even though it appears to be<sup>1</sup>. Schechter says: “The concentration in ownership that is restricting old media has led to conglomeration in news transmission and narrowing of sourcing in new media. It is cheaper for websites to buy someone else’s news than create their own.”

Jupiter Media, a company that tracks Internet and technology analysis and measurement, indicates that the top 8 global media conglomerates listed earlier, are contending over the consolidation and ownership of the Internet<sup>1</sup>. Technology companies such as Microsoft, Google and Yahoo! have already stretched their near-monopolistic tentacles to online news and information and they have enormously succeeded in doing so.

Jupiter Media Metrix suggests the following factors are driving online media consolidation:

- Mergers and acquisitions turning already powerful companies into even more powerful media behemoths;
- Major media companies have been able to invest heavily in improved quality of presentation intensity of marketing and integration with offline programming;
- Economies of scale, those also apply to online businesses as well as traditional businesses.

As far as the issue of diversity of online news and information is concerned, the Oromo online media have been growing and appear to be more diversified than the government-controlled media in Ethiopia. However, with few Oromo websites about a decade old and the majority

about half a decade old, it is safer to argue that the Oromo news media are nascent because they have not yet become full-fledged online media institutions with adequate capital.

Among the reputable news, political and human rights websites, [www.gadaa.com](http://www.gadaa.com), [www.jimmatimes.com](http://www.jimmatimes.com), <http://oromopress.blogspot.com> (news and information websites), [www.oromoliberation.org](http://www.oromoliberation.org) (political organization's website), <http://www.humanrightsleague.com> (Horn of Africa human rights organization) are the ones leading the packs of Oromo online news, information and opinion media.

Oromo news and information websites frequently generate their own content and publish news and information from contributors. The major problem with even prominent Oromo websites is that they rely heavily on content generated by major news companies such as Associated Press (AP), Reuters, Agence France-Presse (AFP), yet again reflecting how the mainstream news and information sources are subtly affecting the Oromo online public sphere. Some news website such as Jimma Times are mere display platforms as they republish or provide links to and display news or information, perhaps without permission, already published by the Voice of America, AP and AFP. Jimma Times also shows a tendency of framing Oromo information, news and opinion according to Amhara-Ethiopianist ideologies. Jimma Times also stirs up controversies and hate speech amongst national groups on issues through the unmoderated and abusive comments it publishes from anonymous and unregistered users. This is counterproductive to laying the foundations for tolerance among diverse groups in and outside the Oromo nation, Oromia. This kind of approach is beneficial only to the present regime.

Of Oromo human rights websites, the one run by the Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa, more often than not, produces well researched and documented press releases of government abuses in Oromia, Ethiopia and the Horn.

Rerunning the content generated elsewhere by larger transnational media corporations and the narrowing of sourcing are weak qualities that Oromo news, information and opinion websites share with most other Internet news outlets around the world. Danny Schechter also asserts that most news and information sites do not provide their own news, but acquire content from news agencies such as Reuters, AFP, and AP<sup>1</sup>. In this sense, Oromo online media are not alone.

There is an obvious need to transform Oromo and Horn of African news media into alternative and viable national institutions of public news, information and opinions. The following subsection provides some core recommendations towards such a transformative effort.

#### 4. Recommendation

As most of the independent Oromian/Ethiopian news media are Diaspora-based, they are removed from the actions on the ground thousands of miles away from the Horn of Africa. As a result, some stories told may not have the needed depth and breadth. Oromo media institutions produce enormous volumes of text and news search results on Google News every day, but pictures and videos documenting or archiving government rampant killings, intimidations, tortures and abuses in the country is seriously lacking. This lack of images in telling stories characterizes not only Oromian news media, but also other Diaspora-based news media from Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa region<sup>1</sup>. As the old Chinese saying goes, “One picture is worth ten thousand words”<sup>1</sup>. Our news media lacks other forms of graphic arts or representations—cartoons, funnies, comics, and news parodies, political satires and comedy clips and films. These forms of media are known to appeal to an overwhelming number of the local, national and global audience. If we miss out on providing images or pictures, it means we give up the strong impact they have on the average person.

The following is a list of other major recommendations that Oromo news media must follow to remain viable alternative institutions of information:

- Create stronger networks with the home populations and smuggle out photos and images;
- Buy and send at least one camera to known opposition strongholds and where mass killings are predictable;
- Set up a centralized archival museum for ethnic-cleansing at a few selected Diaspora community centers in Europe or North America;
- Generate own well-researched and truthful content as much as possible;
- The Oromia, Ogadenian or Ethiopian diasporas must coordinate efforts to establish, fund and recruit professional and talented full-time journalists, who focus on delivering competitive and independent news and information;

The paper identified and discussed in detail the mechanisms by which governments and global media conglomerates use to filter news. In doing so, it used the elements of the propaganda model to explain concepts and practices.

---