

What does Adowa mean for Ethiopians and the rest of Africa? What is left from the Victory of Adowa? What do we owe our patriotic mothers and fathers who saved Ethiopia from Colonial Domination?

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Introduction

To write an article on such a major issue might seem too late. Many have written over the last three or more weeks in memory of the victory of Adowa. Many have tried not only to show the historical importance of the victory of Adowa, but also its political impacts over the liberation movements during the colonial time. The present political, economic social and cultural crisis of our country, however compels us to remember the victory of Adowa throughout the month. Since the unity of our country is at great risk, we have to uphold the significance of the victory of Adowa at this crucial moment in order to bring our forces together and fight for a common purpose. This time the forces that endanger our unity are not only foreign forces, but also forces from within the country.

The present EPRDF government which is led by a minority group from the Tigre region, consciously or unconsciously has been pursuing a systematic and intriguing political agenda over the last 24 years which endangers the unity of our country. Since the concept of a Nation-State and the process of forming it has not been discussed well amongst Ethiopians, and is not firmly rooted in our minds, every ethnic based movement tries to interpret the history of our country not from a socio-cultural history perspective, and social processes point of view, but for its own political purpose. On the other side those who believe in Ethiopian unity have never tried to discuss the causes of underdevelopment which is the main reason for the past and present social and cultural crisis of our country. It must be clear for everybody that without a coherent economic development which could benefit all the social and ethnic groups, there can never be social harmony.

The question of sovereignty which is now is raised and discussed by some Ethiopian scholars cannot and should not be seen in isolation from the organizational structure of the state apparatus and the formation of a Nation-State. If any country does not have a democratic state structure and is hierarchically integrated within the international power relationship it cannot guarantee national sovereignty. Especially when the majority of the Ethiopian people are living below poverty line and have become permanent recipients of aid, one should not reduce the question of national sovereignty to one single issue alone. In other words, the question of Assab and now Blue Nile should not be seen in separation of the entire socio-economic organization of our country. In short, if any country has such a weak institution like in our country, and if the economic system is underdeveloped, and if the masses do not have the right to organize themselves, it is clear that foreign forces try to exploit this situation. Though Ethiopia has a long history, successive Ethiopian governments were not in a position to develop the country on firmer grounds so that our people could not become the victim of foreign aggression.

The present government which seized power 24 years ago, has introduced economic and social policies which were not discussed and debated internally by Ethiopian scholars and which were formulated somewhere and imposed by foreign forces that endanger the social fabric of our society. The EPRDF government has been pursuing a neo-liberal economic policy over the last 24 years which is formulated by the IMF and by the World Bank, and practically hinders the organization of a strong economy and the formation of Nation-State on the basis of science and technology. The neo-liberal economic policy which the government is compelled to practice make our people recipients of permanent aid. In the history of Nation-State building, no European country has ever practiced such kind of economic policy which is against technological changes and broad market structures with diverse attributes that can hold a Nation-State together. Undoubtedly, the economic policy of the EPRDF government, and the fact that thousands of NGOs are operating in our country in the name of helping the poor proves that our country is directly or indirectly under foreign domination. When any country cannot formulate its own economic policies, when it at the same time wages a proxy war, it is practically not an independent state. From this perspective and from the perspective of the socio-economic situation of our country, though Ethiopia has never been colonized, except for a short period of time, its political and economic status is not that much different from other African countries which got their independence almost 50 years ago.

Many African governments, mostly unconsciously, have created a political situation which paves the way for the recolonization of the continent and enslavement of their people. The Ethiopian government which seized political power 24 years ago, supported by the British and the American governments, has been pursuing, consciously a political course which spreads animosity among the various ethnic groups in the name of ethnic federalism. By using ethnic federalism as a pretext for self-determination it plays a divide and rule politics to strengthen its own rule and systematically hinders the development of our country based upon solid foundation. It must be clear for everybody that when the people of a given country raise their hands together, they could easily build their country within a short period. Countries which are not politically stable find it very difficult to bring their forces and work together for a common goal. Their fate will be permanent poverty and the country which is thrown into such kinds of circumstances will lose its human and natural resources. Since many provinces and rural areas of the country lack modern institutions which could mobilize the available resources, and since the government does not have the knowledge to organize modern institutions, resources are being wasted. Foreign forces are using the institutional vacuum of the country and are plundering the resources of the country.

The past two governments, namely that of Emperor Haile Selassie and Colonel Mengistu did not pursue a wise political course either which enhances economic and social development. Consciously or unconsciously they have created a political course which could widen the exiting ethnic differences. They pursued economic policies which did not create wealth for the majority of the masses. They also did not undertake institutional reforms which could mobilize the human and natural resources. The underdevelopment of the country on all levels had therefore created a situation for the growing of ethnic based movements. The present government is a by-product of this kind of unwise and anti-developmental policies, especially that of the Haile Selassie government.

It is no wonder that today, after the victory of Adowa almost 120 years later our country is not in a good shape. After such a grand victory over a foreign invader those patriots and our country deserved something better. The country should have progressed technologically, economically and socially. Since the forces after Emperor Menelik II could not understand the political, economic, cultural and social impacts of such a victory over the white army, they did not dare to take drastic changes to build our country on solid foundation. Especially, the government of Haile Selassie had ample opportunities in the 1950s when the international political order wasn't that much complicated and when many countries were striving to develop economically. Emperor Haile Selassie could not seize this opportunity, and thought that minor reforms could move the country forward. On the other side, he merely relied on outside forces and could not understand the long term impact of dependency for the country. As things became complicated and the economic reforms which he had introduced were not enough to satisfy the needs of our people, he had to face unsurmountable problems. At the end he left us a political vacuum, and social and economic crisis which paved the way for permanent instability. This situation in combination of the revolutionary and anti-revolutionary situation from 1974 until 1992 has enabled the present ethnic based organization to take the political power.

From this vantage point, we have to understand and analyze the historical legacy of Adowa, and consider it as a victory and as a way one step forward to build Ethiopia as a Nation-State with all its attributes. Therefore we are compelled to pose certain questions to understand the essence of a Nation-State. Can a one-time victory be sufficient to hold a country as a nation, or must it be supplemented by other things so that its foundation cannot easily be shaken? What must be done after the victory of Adowa and later on to make our country a strong Nation-State without major challenges from the neighboring countries, and those imperialist forces which do not tolerate or favor the existence of other Nation-States on the foundation of science and technology? In this respect, I will try to show the historical and political impacts of Adowa not only on our people, but also on sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. I will also try to show the limitation of the Adowa victory, because military victory alone is not sufficient to keep the sovereignty of a given country. A country like Ethiopia which had successfully defeated its enemies to defend the sovereignty of the country must not stop there but must construct a new and modern Ethiopia on the basis of science and technology so that it can be respected and not easily be attacked by foreign forces. It must build a new culture which can hold all groups as a force so that they can exercise their freedom and become the masters of their country. It must be constructed by a true republican spirit by upholding humanistic values and true individual freedom which does not contradict social cohesion and mutual cooperation.

The Importance of the victory of Adowa to Ethiopians as a people and its pivotal role for Nation Building

Though the war in Adowa was the most prominent and aggressively fought war, the Italians had attempted many times to wage a war against Ethiopia. In our memory, the battle in Adowa and the defeat of the Italian army by the Ethiopian patriots in 1896, led by Emperor Menelik II holds a special place. Prior to the war in Adowa, the Italian army in its attempt to

systematically exploit the weak position of the scattered forces of the feudal army in our country, started a war in Dogali in 1887. The Ethiopian army led by Ras Alula, the most prominent patriotic force in the Ethiopian history had annihilated the Italian army in the battle of Dogali. This war was a kind of pretext to the next major war which began nine years later. By strengthening its forces and by still believing that Emperor Menelik could not unite the scattered feudal forces and mobilize hundred thousands of armies the Italians wage a war which they had to lose at the end. Thanks to the wise leadership of Emperor Menelik who could convince all the feudal leaders to set aside their differences and stand to the common cause, that is to defend the sovereignty of Ethiopia and build one Ethiopia which can accommodate all the forces of different interests.

The main aim of Italy as the late comer in the history of colonial aggression and domination was not as such to civilize and liberate the masses from feudal subjugation and transform our society into a capitalist economic order but to make our country a colony and at the same time a supplier of agricultural products, and if available, also a supplier of mineral resources. In this case, the colonial ambition of Italy is not different from that of Portugal, Spain, England and France. All the colonial forces of that time had one common agenda towards Sub-Saharan Africa. When they came in the name of civilization, their main aim was to check and at the same time to block the evolutionary development of social processes in various African countries. By colonizing the people of Africa and strictly assigned the Africans to cultivate cash crop products for their countries, their intention was not only to make the colonies major suppliers of raw materials, but also to destroy the already existing division of labor. The fact that Africans were compelled to work as plantation farmers for the colonizers, and the fact that the division of labor hitherto existed was destroyed, it was very difficult to develop an integrated economic system which could enhance and support Nation-State formation. The process of underdevelopment and exploiting the Africa's resources which started in the 15th century when the Portuguese merchants enslaved Africans and shipped them to overseas, and the colonization process of the 19th century had undoubtedly created a social, cultural, economic and political situation which severely affected the process of Nation-building on a scientific basis. Since Africans were not allowed to build their own institutions and forms of organizations through which they could build a sophisticated and dynamic society, it was practically impossible to develop an integrated economic system which could facilitate the mobilization of resources and the movement of capital and labor from one area to the other. The two factors, namely, slavery and colonialism and the massive interventions of European colonizers in the African way of living had totally disturbed the normal process of social formation and Nation-State building. From this time until the present day Sub-Saharan Africa could not find a path of economic and social development on the basis of science and technology.

Italian interest to colonize all of Ethiopia has its starting point in Assab. Italy bought land in Assab in 1869 under the pretext of opening a trading company. From there it systematically expanded to Beilul and then to Massawa in 1885 without being confronted by the Egyptians which controlled the same territory for a longer period. Italy then began expanding to Eastern low lands and extended its occupation to Keren. Though Italy had experienced some setbacks at the beginning to bring some of the feudal leaders at her side, the death of King Yohannes II

in 1889 had created a political vacuum. At the end Italy had managed to occupy the whole territory which is today known as Eritrea and proclaimed that territory as its new colony. Though Emperor Menelik II recognized the new Italian territory for tactical and strategic reasons, the Italian appetite could not be satisfied with the new occupied territory alone and therefore tried to find a means to occupy the entire Ethiopia and make Ethiopia Italy's colony. By exploiting and misinterpreting the treaty of Wuchale (Ucciali) which was signed by Menelik II and Italy itself in 1889, Italy has proclaimed to the world that Ethiopia is its own protectorate though the Amharic version tells us a different story. This misinterpretation and the grand ambition of Italy to bring all of Ethiopia under its rule could not be accepted by Emperor Menelik II; and Emperor Menelik had unilaterally annulled the entire treaty. The annulment of the treaty of Wuchale by Emperor Menelik II became a pretext to declare a war against the forces of Ethiopia. However, by mobilizing over more than 70,000 armies and by uniting all the feudal forces which some of them were once sided along Italy, Emperor Menelik II won a decisive victory in 1896 over the Italian army. His army killed more than 4000 thousand members of the Italian army, and captured almost over 2000 soldiers. The fact that a feudal army led by Emperor Menelik II, which was not trained well in dealing with such an army from a rising capitalist country had defeated the Italian army is a heavy blow to the entire capitalist countries which believed and were confident that they had the natural right and the monopoly to bring the entire African continent under their colonial rule. Emperor Menelik II with his wise leadership and an unbroken faith in order to build a sovereign and a modern nation demonstrated to the world that every nation whether small or big has the right to decide over its own fate, and no nation has the right to occupy by force and subjugate the people of other countries. He also demonstrated to the world that the fate of a given people and the way how it organizes itself can solely be decided by itself and not by any outside force.

The victory of the Ethiopian Army over Italy is not only of a historical and political significance for the Ethiopian people but also for all black people across the globe which until today suffer under neo-colonial domination and racism. The battle of Adowa and the defeat of the Italians had once again proved that no matter how weak a country might be, if the people have a wise leadership and the will to fight for their sovereign right, they could defeat any army, even if it is more organized and sophisticated than their own.

What does such a victory over Italy mean to Ethiopians? One cannot doubt and deny the historical and political importance of such a victory for nation building, and for us as a whole, irrespective of our different social and ethnical backgrounds. This victory is for all Ethiopians. That today we have Ethiopia as our home, is a product of social and historical processes, which many generations had participated. In the recent history, Emperor Tewodros, Emperor Yohannes II, and Emperor Meneleik II, all of these had contributed significantly to preserve the unity of our country and give us an identity. All of them have contributed in their capacities for the rise of modern Ethiopia, and developed a unique kind of Ethiopian patriotism among millions of Ethiopians. Among the three, Menelik II occupies a unique place in vitalizing a unique kind of sense of belongingness to all the people in that country. In his wise leadership he has demonstrated to us and left us a legacy that only combined forces have the capability to yield something fruitful and durable. He taught us also that the

existence of small kingdoms and nationalities will at the end benefit foreign forces. Whatever time it takes to construct a nation, true freedom can only be secured within a unified and democratic country. The battle of Adowa also demonstrated that countries like Ethiopia which could mobilize hundreds thousands of forces could easily defeat a foreign force, how great and well organized. In other words a country that is fragmented and is being governed by forces that have a narrow horizon and are not enlightened, could easily be annexed and defeated. Only with such kinds of selfless effort and sacrifice, and this kind of wise leadership we have today a country we call Ethiopia. Therefore it is our historical and moral duty to do whatever we can, not only to preserve this unity but also to define our role how we can build a modern and dynamic Ethiopia which can satisfy the interests of all ethnic groups, by taking into account true individual freedom which guarantees prosperity. It is not ethnic solidarity that is the basis of true individual freedom and genuine economic development, but the republican idea which fully guarantees true human freedom is the source of creative activity. If the people of a given country cannot freely move from one area to the other, if there is a great obstacle for the free movement of capital and labor there is no progress. Only through interactions and intermingling of the different ethnic groups one can build a dynamic and prosperous country.

Emperor Menelik II and the problem of Nation-State building

Those groups which believe that they represent certain ethnic groups accuse Emperor Menelik II that he occupied all the territories by force. Especially some of the Oromo elite which were influenced and manipulated by protestant churches of some European countries since immemorial, accuse Emperor Menelik II that he had occupied and expanded his territory by applying force. They even went further and accused him of destroying their “democratic and well-cultivated culture” which had “flourished” since the arrival of Menelik’s army. The present EPRDF government also denies the historical role of Emperor Menelik II and all the patriotic forces including Ras Alula who scarified their lives for the sovereignty of Ethiopia. It even denies the process of social and Nation-State formation which started during the era of the Axumite Kingdom around the 4th A.D, and reduces the Ethiopian history to only one hundred years. By selling old books and destroying historical heritages the present Ethiopian government is doing everything to wipe out historical memories from the minds of the youth. As a matter of fact, all countries had started like this and slowly expanded to many areas and later formed as Nation-States. The formation of Nation-State is like the birth of a child or a growing plant which starts from small and expands slowly into many directions. The combination of many factors will lead to the formation of Nation-States. Military power, the expansion of trade activities and the development of division of labor, marriage relationships among the ruling classes, and the interactions among the different communities pave the way at the end for the formation of Nation-States. Therefore to deny this truth and scientific view and to create unnecessary discussions and conflicts prolongs our misery and dependency. In the long run it will endanger the sovereignty and unity of our country. It is simply a waste of time to occupy our minds with this issue rather than moving forwards to build a healthy and strong Ethiopia.

From this point of view what some Oromo elite write regarding their history is unscientific and ahistorical. There has never existed an Oromia land or Oromo nation prior to the expansion of Menelik's army to the south of present day Ethiopia. Prior to the expansion of the army of Emperor Menelik II towards the southern part and the rest of the country, there was no a unified Oromo nation, or land that one could call Oromia Land. First of all, the Oromos had lived scattered in different areas, and expanded into different parts of the country, and annexed and destroyed well-developed Kingdoms in South-West Ethiopia. Again, all these small Kingdoms, including the Kingdoms in eastern parts of the country had paid tributes to the Abyssinian Kingdom. That means they were quasi "Vassal states." This kind of tribute paying and the existence of Vassal states had been also customary in many Western European countries during the middle and late middle ages, though in varied degrees. At the end all Vassal states had to be wiped out and replaced by modern bureaucratic institutions which facilitated the formation of Nation-States in all Western European countries just around the 18th to the 19th century. That means the Ethiopian case is not exceptional; all small feudal administrations and those which lived on different forms of social organization which hampered economic and social development could not remain like that. It is a historical and social necessity that small Kingdoms come under the rule of one centralized administration and live under one flag and trade with one currency. Secondly, in comparison to the other established Kingdoms, like the Hadia and the Sidamas, the Oromos had never had a well established division of labor. The majority of them are either pastoralists or nomads. Oromos did not have a well-advanced division of labor and sophisticated technology, in fact they were by many standards underdeveloped. If one sees through the mirror of cultural history and social transformation, their "society" was stagnated and was underdeveloped in many ways. Only by reading social history through the prism of scientific analysis and dialectical reasoning one could interpret the social formation of his own society. On the other hand, those Oromos which spread upwards and intermingled with the Amharas and other ethnic groups could develop a unique kind of dynamism and develop a new culture. This has been the case in all human history. Isolated societies that lived without interactions with other cultures could not develop a new culture, and therefore could not be transformed to the highest forms of social organizations. By culture I mean, developing a handicraft culture, constructing cities, developing and cultivating new ways of living so as to deal with the vagaries of nature. In short transforming oneself in many aspects and developing a new way of life to exploit nature for once own benefit, can be called cultural transformation. If a given group or society cannot develop new kinds of instruments of labor from time to time it will not be able to withstand natural catastrophes. Thirdly, the supposed "democratic culture" that the Oromos allegedly practiced was not as such a democratic practice in the true sense of the word. Certain clans and usually men practiced this kind of "democratic life." Women did not have the right to participate in such kinds of "democracy." Neither are they allowed to hold property, cattle or land. Fourth, this kind of democracy had existed in the primitive stages of human history when certain militarily abled men got the upper hand. In this case the Gada system of the Oromos is not exceptional. Fifth, prior to the expansion of the army of Emperor Menelik II, due to the transformation within the Oromo system, the Gada system was in a process of dissolving. The centralization of Ethiopia has undoubtedly fastened the process of dissolving the system. Six, the Oromos as one of the most warrior ethnic groups in Ethiopia

had slaughtered thousands of Amharas and other ethnic groups, and even cut the sexual organ of thousands of Amhara men. If one tells me this is an act of civilization, I cannot understand what human civilization means. Some of the people from the Oromo elite deny all this and exaggerate what the Army of Emperor Menelik II has inflicted upon them. Anyway, to deny all these facts and to accuse Emperor Menelik II is not historical and scientific. All European capitalist countries, including the USA have practiced some kind of genocide before they were transformed into Nation-States. The Europeans when they arrived to the “newly discovered” land slaughtered 17 million Indians and enslaved millions of black Americans for plantation and factory work. The American capitalism had developed by enslaving and exploiting black people. In comparison to the formation of Nation-States in Europe, the formation of Nation-State in Ethiopia is not that much brutal as some tried to convince us.

When Emperor Menelik II expanded in many areas and tried to bring the country under generalized and centralized leadership the country and he himself lacked so many things which are essential for Nation-State building. Unlike in feudal Europe in the middle until the late middle ages, the feudal system in Ethiopia lacked many things which could pave the way for the formation of Nation-State. There were no organized villages and cities like Europe of the late middle ages. Division of labor and trade activities which are essential for nation building did not exist. Neither know the country intellectual movements like renaissance, reformation and enlightenment that paved the way for the emergence of new social forces that fought old beliefs and hampered development. There was no a scientific community and intellectual movement like in Europe during the middle and late middle ages. The northern part of the country was also in a similar situation. Under such circumstances it is practically impossible to develop a middle class culture. Under the absence of a middle class which strives to develop as an economic and social force, social transformation cannot take place. That means when Emperor Menelik II expanded into many areas of the country he was confronted by many factors which challenged his dreams and plans. He did not have the bureaucratic force and institutional organizations which could mobilize the natural and human resources to develop a democratic and modern Ethiopia.

When we come to his royal and his surroundings, Menelik II was very farsighted and advanced in comparison to the forces surrounding him. He was an enlightened Emperor par excellence who wanted to transform Ethiopia and give it a unique kind of image, namely a respected and strong country. Unfortunately he was surrounded by backward elements which hindered his ambition. The division and the power struggle in his surroundings were exploited by those imperialist forces which wanted to see a weak and fragmented Ethiopia. These forces knew well that once the country gets the advantage of being developed technologically and industrially there will arise a new kind of nationalism which will be the basis of further development. Therefore by exploiting the weak position of the aristocracy and the feudal lords, they systematically weakened the country and the state apparatus.

For the development of any country the will of one emperor is not enough. There must be a social and intellectual force which wants real change and social transformation. From the European history we learn that some emperors were pushed and supported to bring fundamental changes in their country and through that they could push away those forces

which resisted change. In the absence of a well cultivated intellectual and liberal force no country can develop. From this perspective, Ethiopia lacked genius people like Kepler, Leibnitz, Kant, Schiller, Goethe, Lessing and Mendelson, to mention some. Without these kinds of enlightened personalities with encyclopedic knowledge the formation of a Nation-State will be met by many challenges. Ethiopia also did not have either a kind of Meiji dynasty with clear-cut ambition that was able to pull our country out of feudalism.

This being the case when Emperor Menelik II brought the country under one centralized rule, the 19th century was the era of imperialism. Almost all capitalist countries were transformed to the highest stages of capitalist development. The time was the period of bringing many underdeveloped areas under the banner of free trade in once own sphere of influence. It was the period in which capitalist countries competed against each other to incorporate many underdeveloped areas and convert them to a plantation economy. In order to resist such an aggressive force, one needs a well-organized social force and culture that could exploit the rivalries of the capitalist countries. When Japan during the Tokugawa dynasty and later on during the Meiji dynasty was surrounded by imperialist forces, especially the Meiji dynasty understood well how it could bring technological and economic transformation. The Meiji dynasty understood well without science and technology Japan will be butchered and fragmented by imperialist forces. Therefore the way out was to develop Japan, intellectually, technologically and scientifically. Unfortunately Ethiopia lacked a situation like that of Japan. The reforms within the Tokugawa feudal order, and its inclination towards commercial activities could ease its hardline approach, and paved the way for the Meiji dynasty which favored industrialization and technological changes. The Ethiopian feudal lords were not that much farsighted, and in many respects they were centrifugal. In short they were not ready for changes.

Though Emperor Meneleik II has introduced new technologies and modernized the country, the modernization effort he introduced was not enough to develop the country in all areas. Because of he was old and because of his illness he could not continue to bring about new dynamism to the country. A radical transformation which could change Ethiopia to a full-fledged Nation-State was postponed.

We learn now thanks to the book of Dr. Negede Gobezie and others that in the 1920s there was an effort and a limited social movement surrounding Teferi Makonen, later on Emperor Haile Selassie to bring economic reforms and technological changes like that of Japan. We learn also that there was an intensive contact between the Japanese and Ethiopian rulers. As this information became known in some European cities, those forces with imperialist ambition began campaigning against Emperor Haile Selassie and the forces surrounding him. Their main aim was to prevent Ethiopia from taking the same kind developmental path that of Japan. Some say that one of the main causes of the Italian invasion for the second time was to prevent Ethiopia to take the same kind of developmental path like Japan. Most European countries openly or tacitly pushed Italy to invade Ethiopia so that the dream of the vibrant generation of the 1920s could not be materialized. That is why Italy has annexed Ethiopia for the second time in 1935 and wiped out a generation of intellectuals and patriots who wanted to build a prosperous Ethiopia. If Ethiopia will be industrialized and will better-off

technologically it will be an example for the rest of Africa and therefore it is important to avert this effort. This shows the fate of a weak nation, especially a black country that of Ethiopia. As we see though there were many efforts to introduce modern technologies the Europeans were not ready to share us their knowledge. They have tried everything so that we remain underdeveloped and weak. That time until today the Europeans forget that they have developed science and technology not by themselves alone. The Egyptians and the Greek have contributed a lot for the development of Europe. The development of science and technology in Europe starting the 15th century is a continuation of Egyptian and the Greek civilization. That means for the development of Europe all human beings have contributed in various forms.

The Process of Modernization during the Era of Emperor Haile Selassie

When Emperor Haile Selassie came back from his exile in England and took again the throne his true plan was not known. Whether he could continue his dream of the 1920s or bring the country under neo-colonial domination, we do not have clear information on this. What one can say is that when he ascended again to the throne, and became again the King of Kings he was in a very weak position. He had to build the bureaucracy and the administration structure from the scratch. He did not have a well-enlightened intellectual force which brings new dynamism to the country. In order to prevent the industrialization of Ethiopia the British imperialists had collected all the industries and including the modern radio stations that the Italians installed, transported them either to India or other colonies which they controlled. Unfortunately Emperor Haile Selassie had no other option other than accepting that. From a developmental perspective this aggression by the British imperialists was a heavy blow to our country. Though the Italian fascists build and developed these technologies for their own purposes, at the end the Ethiopian patriots have paid a heavy price to defend Ethiopia from an overall colonization. That means the technologies and the industries should belong to Ethiopia, and the British imperialists had no right to take them away.

After this Emperor Haile Selassie made major economic mistakes which took the country many steps backwards. He reversed the feudal tenant relationship which paved the way for a new kind of social and ethnic conflict. Secondly, instead of modernizing the bureaucracy throughout the country, many of the rural areas became under the control of uneducated people who were not able to create new wealth. Many of the regional administrations until the 70s of the 20th century were backward and underdeveloped. The administrators were incapable to introduce institutional reforms which could mobilize resources and allocate the resources in a just manner so that division of labor and technological development could become possible.

When we look at the modernization effort of Emperor Haile Selassie, unfortunately he was not able to pave the way not for an overall industrialization and social transformation, but contrary his modernization cemented the existing underdevelopment. The so-called import-substitution industrialization he had introduced is kind of peripherization, which produces heterogeneous forms of production which cannot be the basis of capitalistic accumulation. The industries he had introduced under the control of foreign forces, could not create job opportunities for the millions of people that migrated to the cities, especially to Addis Ababa.

This created a center-periphery relationship, while millions became either Kulis, prostitutes and shoe shiners. Most of the people were compelled to work in the above-mentioned sectors, which, from the perspective of national and integrated economy did not have the potentials to create new wealth on ever developed technologies.

The modernization effort of Haile Selassie has created a neo-colonial mode of production which threw our country backwards and paved the way for sectarian and ethnic groups which believed that they could fulfill their own dreams by creating problems. Haile Selassie was also responsible for the rise of a new military and civilian bureaucracy which is very intriguing in its thought. This force was a major carrier of underdevelopment; and by allying itself with foreign forces and spying, it destroyed the true meaning of patriotism and was later on responsible for the defeat of the revolutionary process. One of the major weakness of the Haile Selassie's government was to train such a force under the auspicious of imperialist forces. Emperor Haile Selassie thought that by allying himself with the Americans he may get benefits. The Americans well understood his anti-communist position and wanted to exploit that in order to expand their sphere of influence around the region. Their main aim was, however to prevent the country from pursuing a nationalistic agenda that may help industrialization and holistic development. Since Haile Selassie and the groups surrounding him did not understand the social forces in and outside of the country which endanger social cohesion, by allying themselves with imperialist forces and getting minor support from them, they had created a social atmosphere which brings social instability to the country. Those forces which used this vacuum became compradors to instigate a civil war in all fronts to dismantle Ethiopia as a Nation-State. Unfortunately some of them were doing that under the name of Marxism, though they thought that they were fighting to liberate Ethiopia from feudalism and imperialism. However, the methodology they pursued and the fact that they fought under the banner of self-determination including secession, this kind of struggle brought incalculable damages to the Ethiopian society. They have never grasped that the suppression and the poverty all the Ethiopian people had to experience during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie were related to underdevelopment. They could not grasp that the ruling class is the product of the Ethiopian society, and hence this class needs an enlightened approach to educate its mind. Their misunderstandings of social processes, and by simply upholding certain slogans they thought that they could bring social transformation. Especially, the unwise approach of certain groups and their hasty method of struggle to seize political power, and their adherence to one ideology and misinterpreting the concept brought incalculable damages to our country.

The era of Emperor Haile Selassie could not only be remembered by introducing a deformed industrial policy. By allying himself with the Americans and gave them a big areal for their Embassy staff in Addis and a military base in Asmara became the unconscious tools of imperialism. The Americans by using their omnipotent position began recruiting agents which dismantle Ethiopia as a Nation-State, and throw it into permanent war. The war in Eritrea, and later on the annexation of Ethiopia by Said Bare forces, and the rise of the Woyane, or the present regime cannot be conceived without the help of the Americans and other foreign forces. From this perspective Emperor Haile Selassie was not the defender of Ethiopian sovereignty as some try to make us believe. Neither was he a patriot. By all accounts he

threw the country in an impasse from which our country could not come out easily. Consciously or unconsciously he created a political atmosphere so that social cohesion and economic dynamism could not become the rule of our country. He prevented the development of a well-cultivated middle class and an intellectual force which could give orientation to the majority of the people. He created a social, cultural and political vacuum which the present generation cannot tackle easily. Under the era of globalization and aggressive behavior from certain countries which still believe in hegemonial aspiration the development of a Nation-State on the basis of science and technology cannot be an easy task. Especially the spread of a free trade doctrine and a neo-liberal ideology, and the fact that certain groups in weak countries become beneficial of such kinds of doctrine, are major challenges for countries like than of Ethiopia. The spread of a new consumption culture that consumes the meagre resources of a given country hinders the accumulation of real capital. Therefore, the development of an economic system on broader basis, and the introduction of new culture which can cultivate the minds of the youth will be a great challenge for countries like Ethiopia. In short, the present international political and economic order could not give space to freely think and apply what one wants. The way out of such an impasse is to systematically study and analyze the international economic, political and military order in order to organize oneself and bring changes.

All in all, though Ethiopia was not colonized like the rest of African countries it could not escape the fate of other African countries. Like other African countries after independence, Ethiopia too must pursue a modernization policy which on one hand cemented the existing social formation, on the other hand produced social forces that are more interested in trade activities rather than becoming an engine of real development. The modernization policy that Emperor Haile Selassie had introduced prevented the new social forces to look beyond simple trading activities that generate quick money. The cumulative effect of such a modernization policy is poverty and underemployment. Though Ethiopia is endowed with a variety of resources, the introduction and application of such a neo-classical model of growth hindered the systematic use of the given resources. Starting in the 1950s and throughout the 1970s and until now all African countries must practice a neo-liberal economic policy which systematically prevents technological transformation. Some of them by accepting the free trade doctrine and by becoming the member of the WTO, and some other free trade organizations, many African countries are converted into neo-colonial domination and to a plantation economy. In Ethiopia too, after the present government seized political power the country must practice what is known as the so-called Structural Adjustment Program (SAPs). As many African countries, Ethiopia too, by opening its market and give farm lands to the so-called investors it is converted into a neo-colonial country. In short, the victory over Italy in 1896 in Adowa remained in vain. Like in many African countries, Ethiopians too could not fulfill the dream of their mothers and fathers who fought against colonial domination. The present day colonization is not a direct aggression like in the 19th century. The new masters by developing sophisticated instruments, and by spreading a free trade doctrine across many countries they control directly and indirectly the resources of many African countries.

The Task Ahead and our Duty

When our mothers and fathers fought against foreign invaders who wanted to colonize us, they had something in mind. They wanted to transfer to us a respected country in which all citizens irrespective of their ethnic differences live in pride and dignity. Because they had inherited a cultural heritage from Aksum to the Zagwe dynasty and then to the Solomonite dynasty, they believed that they had to preserve this cultural heritage by at the same time introducing reforms. All had tried to introduce certain reforms. But the cultural and social limitation in which they lived could not allow them to go further and introduce swift measures. Besides this, as many other African countries, Ethiopia was also cut from the cultural and intellectual movements of Western Europe. The intellectual and social transformation process which began in Italy and later on spread in many areas of Europe could not trickle down to Ethiopia and other African countries. Therefore, we could not and must not blame our mothers and fathers, and our leaders for the current state of Ethiopia. The future lies within our hands.

If we want to save Ethiopia from collapsing, we must transform our attitude totally. First of all, all opposition forces must understand one thing: the present government seized power with the help of foreign forces to stir-up the country from within so that permanent war and ethnic conflict become the feature of our country. If we do not understand this we cannot move further. Secondly, we have to understand the social forces which undermine the sovereignty of certain nations like Ethiopia which are responsible for the present turmoil across many countries. Thirdly, we must believe in ourselves. Foreign forces could not save us and it is not in their interest to see a well-developed and coherent Ethiopia. Therefore, by appealing to this or that force or country, let alone to any president or to the United Nations, one cannot build a Nation-State with the foundation of science and technology. These forces which permanently write letters and appeals to some Senators and presidents to intervene in the electoral process of our country so that “fair election” could be conducted must understand that their appeal don’t help our people and our country. Their appeals rather will confuse the already confused masses and youth. I therefore appeal to these guys to keep away from the Ethiopian political movement. True freedom needs a wise political approach and sophisticated knowledge in social and political history. My appeal to the youth and those still believe in true freedom, do not hear these guys who boast that they can free Ethiopia from the Woyane regime by doing this and that. They are pursuing a very intriguing and contradictory course which at the end disintegrates all the forces, and make us hopeless and disoriented.

Therefore the best method of resolving our problem is permanent study in order to find the path of freedom. He who does not pose questions why things in our country and across the globe the way that they are, and does not make any effort to research will not contribute to Nation-Building. Though there are no new things in this world, we still live in darkness. We can redeem ourselves from darkness and play our historical roles if we open our minds for new ideas and challenges. Fourth, those ethnic based forces which think and believe that they are fighting to free their nationalities they are doing the opposite. What these forces have been pursuing over the last 40 or more years is one simple agenda; they want to seize political power by any means and serve the interests of this or that foreign force. Instead of upholding

the messages of those gallant leaders from their various nationalities who fought along the side of Emperor Menelik II, they betray their true mission. These ethnic based groups, instead of finding the true causes of underdevelopment and absence of freedom in Ethiopia, they spread ahistorical and unscientific views namely that Ethiopia has been dominated since immemorial by a single ethnic group, i.e. the Amhara. This unscientific and ahistorical view made the Amharas a target of those forces which are not friendly to Ethiopia and Ethiopian nationalism, and think that the Amharas are nationalists which hinder foreign domination and exploitation. Therefore, their main aim is to exterminate the alleged factors of Ethiopian nationalism, i.e. Orthodox Church and Amhara nationalism. These guys make a big mistake when they target these two groups. The Amharas have never fought alone to liberate Ethiopia; and all nationalities, predominantly the Oromos, have fought for the preservation of Ethiopian unity. My appeal to the ethnic based groups therefore is to forget your ambition of seizing political power and try to become a power of change like others by becoming together and study the problem of underdevelopment in our country. Those who try to roll the wheel of history backwards are fighting against their own brothers and sisters who want to see a bright future. Therefore ethnic federalism is not the solution to true freedom but dialectical analysis and reason alone are the true methods which help us to study our problems and find solution.

Therefore the new spirit of Ethiopiawinet should be humanism which upholds reason and scientific thought. Religion and ethnic based beliefs and movements cannot be instruments of redemption. Religion cannot be the basis of science and technology. Though religion has a great moral appeal if it is interpreted well as well as challenged, religion cannot solve social and economic problems. Religion cannot replace science and scientific thought. Sticking the concept of Ethiopiawinet to religion alone, is just trying to confuse the masses, especially the youth. After all the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has never played a transformative role. Since it is devoid of philosophical and ethical thoughts, it could not contribute to spiritual innovation and self-confidence. If the Ethiopian Orthodox Church wants to contribute something tangible for the unity and integrity of our country it must transform itself and must be engaged in social affairs. If we study the European social history all great reforms and scientific investigations came from some clergy men who broke themselves from tradition. In this case the Ethiopian Orthodox Church could learn a lot from the religious movements in Europe starting the 13th century onwards.

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