

# Neoliberal Imperialism Creating a Fragile Ethiopian State: *Foretelling Irreversible Tragedies*

## Part I

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### Premise

*Weakness, fragility, and failure* of a governance system are sequenced sociopolitical and economic conditions that cause national tragedies. Consider, for example, the nation state of Somalia, Ethiopia's immediate neighbor. It failed about 30 years ago to function as *a nation of law and order*; and remains a tragically failed country. Somalia has become a budgetary burden to the UN and the AU; and a peace and security nightmare to Ethiopia. By all indicators, Ethiopia appears to have passed the threshold of *a weak state to a fragile state*, approaching the tragedy of *a failed state*.

We must learn from our history. Historical facts matter very much. They are useful for decision-making. We ought to analyze the frightening current sociopolitical climate in Ethiopia in terms of the social, economic, and political upheavals through which the Motherland went through since the 1960s. Those of us who witnessed the oppression of the Imperial rules of Emperor Haile Selassie; and the savagery of Mengistu Hailemariam's military junta have useful historical knowledge that must be used. From 1960 to 1974, millions of Ethiopians perished in Tigray, Wollo, and elsewhere, because of famine, hunger, and starvation, conditions the Emperor's dysfunctional government was unable to prevent; and during its 17-year (1974-1991) reign of terror, the military junta massacred hundreds of thousands of old and young Ethiopians to force them into submission, while people were starving to death throughout Ethiopia. Providing complete analysis of the savagery of Mengistu Hailemariam's Derg, the military regime, is beyond the scope of this essay.

### Constitutional Order Violated in the Amhara State

What is going on in Ethiopia? For no reason other than whom they are, hundreds of Ethiopians are being murdered and their properties being torched, while others are being uprooted and internally displaced. All these human miseries are happening, while the EPRDF regime is watching it all. EPRDF has become *impotent* completely. Why?

The rally of the Amhara chauvinists in Bahir-Dar has demonstrated powerlessness or apathy of EPRDF. The prevailing sociopolitical climate makes existence of an EPRDF government questionable seriously. On 30 June 2018, the Amhara extremist elements held a massive rally in Bahir-Dar, waving illegal flag of the Imperial era. One of the laughable acts was watching a helicopter flying over the huge crowd, bearing the Imperial flag, as if the event was a declaration of victory won at battlefields, which the cowards cannot do. Another laughable scene was an Eritrean flag tied to the Imperial flag. A combination of the two flags was being waved high to the skies! By doing that, **the coward and wild Amhara extremists** begged Isaias Afeworki, Ethiopia's enemy number one, to give them his blessings and help them to control the whole Ethiopia *under one flag, one language, one culture, one history, and one aristocratic governance system* by abolishing the federal system. In other words, returning Ethiopia to the eras of devastating-chronic poverty. What the chauvinist elements do not seem to grasp is the fact that Isaias Aferworki remains under the watchful eyes of Woyane; and his military and political power are being degraded day-after-day.

**Another perplexing scene:** There was another perplexing scene at the Bahir-Dar rally. Deputy Prime Minister, Demeke Mekonnen, and the President of the Amhara Regional State, Gedu Andargachew, were the leading keynote speakers. Both of these men are members of the current government of the *Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*, the EPRDF government. Their speeches were highly charged-full of bravados, "**we the Amharas!**" In short, their actions are **national treason**, because they violated the rules enshrined in the Ethiopian

Constitution. As members of the governing body, the EPRDF, they should respect and uphold primacy of *the rule of law* in accordance with the Constitution. Immediate legal actions must be taken against these running dogs of a tragic civil war. The Ethiopian Parliament must summon (call upon) Abiy Ahmed to explain the well-orchestrated rally that violated the *Constitutional Order*.

Demeke, Gedu, and Co. have been and are hatching counter revolutionary actions, supported by neoliberal imperialism, Isaias Afeworki being an instrument. They do not care, if Ethiopia's fate is equal to that of Syria, Yemen, S. Sudan, Iraq, Afghanistan, and many other **failed states**. External forces, primarily the West, led by CIA, caused the tragedies of those mentioned and many other countries worldwide, all the making of neoliberal imperialism. Demeke, Gedu, and Co., the coward extremists, think that they will be able to assimilate and *Amharanize* all other Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples of Ethiopia. If they do not behave and **accept primacy of the rule of law**, the **Ethiopian Constitution** will teach them lessons they will never forget for the rest of their lives. No force, be it internal or external, will be able to dismantle the **Ethiopian Revolutionary Democratic Developmental State (ERDDS)**, engineered by the brilliant leader, Meles Zenawi. **Ethiopia misses you Meles!** With the exception of the self-serving extremist Amharas, all Ethiopians are ready to sacrifice their lives defending the ERDDS, which is a governance system of **inclusiveness, justice, and equity**.

### **Genocidal-Mob Lynching of Tigraians in the Amhara Regional State**

It was shocking to hear and watch through multiple media outlets Tigraians being harassed, bitten, and killed in cities of the Amhara Regional State of Ethiopia, their own country. From their hideouts in Asmara, Eritrea, the Birhanu Nega and Co. group, a declared terrorist organization, called Ginbot-7, built underground network of flash-mob hooligans and unleashed genocidal rampages during the months of July and August 2016 against Tigraians, who lived for generations in their own Motherland, Ethiopia's Amhara Regional State. For the mere fact that they were Tigraians, hundreds were mobbed and massacred; their properties were ransacked and torched; and more than 11,000 of them, including mothers and their children, were forced to escape to neighboring North Sudan. Demeke Mekonnen, Kasa Teklebirhan, and Gedu Andargachew, the top leaders of Amhara and members of the ruling body, EPRDF, watched the tragic genocidal actions from their comfortable offices in Addis Ababa and Bahir-Dar. They implicitly approved the tragedies.

**Crucial questions on the current conditions:** Given the above signs of national danger, asking pertinent questions is imperative:

- (1) Who is Abiy Ahmed?
- (2) Who is playing dangerous political intrigues?
- (3) Who is leading EPRDF? Is it alive?
- (4) Why is Abiy Ahmed having difficulties to accept Woyane's political and military prowess? After liberating Tigray, Woyane coordinated Amhara, Oromo, and Southern progressive forces to destroy the barbaric military machine of Mengistu Hailemariam, the butcher of humans Africa had ever seen. Abiy's *beating around the bush* (inability) to answer out rightly to an Afari elder's comments and a question, at the Afar Public Meeting, makes him a suspect. More than sixty thousand Tigrayan heroes and heroines sacrificed their lives willingly to *usher in* peace, justice, equity, democracy, and development in Ethiopia. He, Abiy, hated to acknowledge this historic truth loudly and clearly. He will do it soon!
- (5) Abiy Ahmed is visiting the USA, *the mother of Imperialism*, very soon. Why so soon to America? Why not to China, the force behind modern Ethiopia's miraculous successes? America hates the miraculous successes achieved through China's true help, with no *strings attached*, as the West – America particularly – does.
- (6) Did the American Embassy in Addis Ababa and the CIA arranged the "*strategic orientation visit*"? One can raise several other questions to analyze Abiy Ahmed's behavioral traits. For now, I stop here.

### **We Are Members of One Family**

The coward chauvinists must swallow the bitter pill of truth that Eritrea and Tigray are members of one family. Let alone their weak machinations to separate us, no any other human power can break our natural bondage, built upon common genetic traits and cultural elements of language, values, norms, customs, folklore, and a dietary system. We survive sharing one God given common habitat, geographic location and its natural resources and environment. We drink water from the same rivers. Our animals graze on the same rangelands and

drink water in the same rivers. Our children play our common traditional games and songs. Let me give you essential examples: I (Mogos Abraham), Meles Zenawi, and Isaias Afewroki are **Tigraians** by our fathers and **Eritreans** by our mothers. Do not try to be clever beyond your small brains' capacities to separate family members. We know you well. You are always eager to take advantage of family disputes.

### **Islamic Republic of Ethiopia?**

I know the Middle Eastern Islamic regimes' dreams and wishes very well – particularly their wishes for Ethiopia. You should know that Isaias is using you as his pawns to sustain his dictatorship in order to fulfill the wishes of *his sustainers*, the Arabs – particularly the Egyptians, the Saudis, and the Arab Emirates, who are determined to see an **Islamic Republic of Ethiopia**. This was the wish of their ancestors; and remains an ultimate goal of the present generations of all Arabs. All Ethiopians must be mindful and be vigilant as Yohannes IV and Alula Aba Nega did. Read the short history next.

### **Historic Imperatives**

The current treachery of the Amhara chauvinist elements is a reminder of the historic betrayal of Minilik II, who sabotaged Yohannes IV's military victories fighting foreign invaders. Emperor Yohannes demonstrated his patriotism, leadership skills, and military prowess against all Ethiopia's enemies of his time. For example, the Ethiopian forces, under the command of the renowned African General, Raési Alula Aba-Nega, routed well-equipped **Egyptians**, led by European and American mercenaries, in the following battlefields: (i) in 1875 at *Gundet*; (ii) in 1876 at *Guraé*; (iii) in 1880 at *Senhit*; and (iv) in 1887 at *Aylet*. Again, in that year (1887), just after *Aylet*, Alula Aba-Nega scored a decisive victory over Italian invaders at *Dogali*. The Italians called their humiliating defeat at this historic battlefield as "*The Dogali Massacre*"<sup>1</sup>.

While Emperor Yohannes was fighting, however, Minilik was making secret deals with the Italians and other enemies of Ethiopia to either undermine or kill Emperor Yohannes IV. Shortly after the *Dogali* debacle, the Italians agreed in a secret treaty to supply Minilik with 5,000 Remington rifles and money; and to recognize him as a sovereign power in return for his promise to assist Italy's colonial expansion. Subsequently, between 1885 and 1895, a total of 189,000 weapons were delivered to Minilik. Emperor Yohannes IV died on Mar. 12, 1889 at Metema, in today's *Amhara Regional State*, while defending his beloved country against the Mahdists of Mahdi Mohammed Ahmed of Sudan. How and why Emperor Yohannes IV died remains a historic mystery. Who fired the fateful bullet and what part of his body was hit? This is a historic mystery that historians should let us know. Many writers believe that Minilik's agents under the auspices of the Italians killed Emperor Yohannes, the King of Kings.

The degree of betrayal and greed of Minilik for political power at any cost (including the sale and dismemberment of Ethiopia) revealed his unpatriotic and idiotic mentality. As if he was to live for eternity, immediately after the death of Yohannes IV, just in less than two months, on May 2, 1889, Minilik signed the *Treaty of Wuchale*; claimed the Ethiopian Imperial Throne; and sold to the Italians Ethiopia's Red Sea frontier, Bahri-Negash (dismembered the Motherland). Then, the buyers, the Italians, named Ethiopia's Bahri Negash Eritrea.

***How about the 1896 African Victory of Adwa?*** Frequent wars fought against external invaders in Tigray's soil are the major historical events that perpetuated poverty in Tigray. In a span of 40 years, "*some twenty major battles were fought in Tigrayan soil between the Battle of Adwa (1896) and the Italian invasion of 1935*"<sup>2</sup> (emphasis added). Tigraian men and women, the peasantry, had to bear the brutalities of the wars. In addition to their bravery in fighting the foreign enemies, the poor Tigraian households took care of wounded heroes and heroines and provided food, water, and shelter. Keep in mind that was a peasant army fighting a modern European war machine. Ethiopia did not have a salaried-national army until 1941. The rules of war during those years were to let "*soldiers feed themselves at the expense of the peasants on whose lands they traversed. Indeed, pillaging (plundering and robbing) from the peasants and collecting war booty were the soldiers' chief incentives for*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.historynet.com/first-italo-abyssinian-war-battle-of-adowa.htm> , accessed on 05 June 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Young, John. 1997. Peasant revolution in Ethiopia: the Tigray People's Revolution Front, 1975 – 1991 (p. 46). Cambridge University Press, New York, NY.

*joining the army*” (emphasis added).<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the Tigraian men and women provided crucial topographic information on the frontlines, transportation logistics (donkeys and mules), and intelligence about the whereabouts of the enemy. Didn’t you learn about the patriotism of Bashai Awáloom? It is bitterly annoying to observe Ethiopia’s writers and policy makers give lip-service to Tigrá’s sacrifices to protect Ethiopia’s sovereign integrity. Memilik should not be given all the credit for the African victory of Adwa. It should be recorded as a victory of the frontline people!

The present Ethiopian generation must *immortalize* the enlightening patriotism of Emperor Yohannes IV and his brilliant general, Alula Aba-Nega. Monuments must be erected in Addis Ababa and in Mekelle, at the top of *Enda-Yesus* escarpment, facing to the northern Ethiopian frontiers, the battlefields of: *Gundet, Guraé, Senhit, Aylet, and Dogali* . These were the main battlefields where the Emperor’s most trusted general, Alul Aba-Nega, routed Ethiopia’s enemies, the Egyptians and the Italians. For Raési Alula Aba-Nega, I suggest that his imposing (huge) statue must be erected at a national park somewhere in Tembien, his birth homeland; and his tomb at the Endaba Gerima Monastery must be rebuilt, modernized and enshrined. These monuments along with the other many tourist attractions Tigrá has will be great sources of revenues. One only hopes that the Federal and the State of Tigrá governments will take the necessary measures.

### **The Follies and Fallacies of Neoliberal Imperialism**

We live in a dangerous world that requires immediate collective action of all concerned. Focusing on our own predicaments, the need for unity and vigilance to protect the Motherland is an urgent matter. Hoping to enhance our awareness, regarding the global geopolitical intrigues being played, I describe some of the key follies and fallacies of neoliberalism as follows. In Part II, I will highlight what should be done to usher in Ethiopia’s genuine sustainable development.

I briefly characterize imperial neoliberalism for the hurried reader. Neoclassical economists, the architects of the imperial neoliberalism, invoke the controversial theoretical fundamentals of neoclassical economic theory, which promotes perfectly competitive free market economy. What are the required conditions for the ideal-neoclassical perfectly competitive market structure to occur? Two categories out of the long list of unrealistically presumed conditions are: (1) relegation of national governments – particularly those of poor nations – to the duties of macroeconomic stabilization, protection of economic and political freedoms and private property rights of individuals, and opening up the domestic marketplace for competition to promote free market economic globalization; and (2) prevention of government ownership of productive sectors of the economy, arguing that it (government ownership on behalf of citizens) causes market distortions.

Based on these and similar conditions imposed on poor nations, neoclassical economic growth models are constructed and applied to generate empirical results that are used for policy recommendations. Multinational corporations, operating under the precepts of neoliberalism, externalize (pass on to the public) social costs and ecological damages associated with their own operations. Governments of poor countries that require financial support for genuine sustainable development are often pressured to:

- open up and liberalize their domestic markets for multinational corporations;
- devalue their currencies;
- remove subsidies, although necessary to develop and manage essential infrastructures;
- privatize key sectors of the national economies – particularly the financial, railway and road transportation systems, maritime lines, airline industry, information and communication technologies (ICTs), and energy sectors;
- remove any policy intended to monitor, evaluate, control, and stabilize market prices; and
- implement strict austerity measures, meaning freezing wage rate increases, government spending for social and economic infrastructures, thriftiness, and frugality in the financial sector.

What are the consequences of a neoliberal system? Read the following two examples.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

***Human misery examples of neoliberal imperialism***

In a classic international bestseller book, *When Corporations Rule the World*, David C. Korten (2001) stated, “*Foreign aid, even grand aid, becomes actively antidevelopment when the proceeds are used to build dependence on imported technology and experts, encourage import-dependent consumer lifestyles, fund waste and corruption, displace domestically produced products with imports, and drive millions of people from the lands and waters on which they depend for their livelihoods – all of which are common outcomes of World Bank projects and structural adjustment programs*” (emphasis added).

Another preeminent economist, winner of the *Nobel Prize for Economic Sciences*, Professor Joseph E. Stiglitz (2012), in one of his several books, *The Price of Inequality: How today’s Divided Society Endangers Our Future*, makes the following key conclusions: (a) Recent U.S. financial income growth primarily occurred at the top 1%, i.e., the 99% Americans did not benefit from America’s economic growth; and (b) *inequities* in the measures (metrics) of human well-being, such as health, education, housing, security, justice, leisure, and universal suffrage are much more vivid than financial income inequalities in America.

\*\*\*\*\* **End of Part I** \*\*\*\*\*