

ABBREVIATIONS USED

AFD	-----	Alliance for Freedom and Democracy
CAFPDE	-----	Council for Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy
CUD	-----	Coalition for Unity and Democracy
CEOPO	-----	Coalition of Ethiopian Opposition Political Organizations
COEDF	-----	Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic Forces
EMLF	-----	Ethiopian Marxist-Leninist Forces
EPRDF	-----	Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Forces
FDD	-----	Forum for Democratic Dialogue
EPRP	-----	Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party
MEISON	-----	An Amharic acronym for All Ethiopian Socialist Movement
MLLT	-----	Marxist-Leninist League of Tigray
OLF	-----	Oromo Liberation Front
ONC	-----	Oromo National Congress
OPC	-----	Oromo People's Congress
PDOs	-----	Peoples' Democratic Organizations
SEPDU	-----	Southern Ethiopian Peoples' Democratic Union
TGE	-----	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
TPLF	-----	Tigrayan People's Liberation Front
UDJ	-----	Unity for Democracy and Justice
UEDF	-----	United Ethiopian Democratic Forces

THE TIGRAYAN-LED ETHIOPIAN STATE, REPRESSION, TERRORISM AND GROSS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN OROMIA AND ETHIOPIA¹

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I submit this article in honor of I. M. Lewis.

The minority Tigrayan-led Ethiopian government² is attempting to give a final solution for a large political problem that has existed for several centuries—the relationship between the Oromo and their Amhara-Tigrayan colonizers. In this way, the current regime is trying to establish a Tigrayan hegemonic state both in Ethiopia and in the Horn of Africa. Since 1992, the Meles government has been focusing on brutally attacking the Oromo national movement led by the Oromo

¹Paper presented at the Horn African Americans for Peace First Annual Human Rights Conference, Minneapolis, Minnesota, April 13, 2008.

²This regime was emerged from the Tigrayan population, which is estimated between 5 and 7 million. The Oromo are the largest ethnonational group and estimated at 40 million of the 80 million people in Ethiopia, and seconded by the Amhara ethnonational group. The previous successive Ethiopian governments were mainly the domains of the successive Amhara ruling groups. Since 1991, the Tigrayan state elites have been dominating and controlling the Ethiopian political economy.

Liberation Front (OLF) and on robbing the economic resources of Oromia in order to enrich Tigrayan elites and their collaborators and to specifically to develop the Tigrayan region. To achieve its political and economic objectives, the regime primarily uses its puppet organization known as the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO) that was created by, and is today controlled by, the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF); the OPDO is led by Tigrayan cadres, elements of Oromo speaking colonial settlers, and opportunistic Oromos who would do anything in exchange for luxurious lifestyles. Using the OPDO, the Meles government has attempted to construct a political façade of a supposed self-rule and a multinational government to give an Oromo face to its colonial policy and control over Oromia

While murdering and terrorizing millions of Oromos in Oromia, the Meles regime has established a political relationship with the governments of Kenya, Djibouti, Sudan, and some Somali warlords in order to prevent outside support and sanctuary for the Oromo national movement and to extend its terrorist activities into the Horn of Africa. Western powers, particularly the United States, powerful European countries, as well as China have been supporting the political and economic policies of the Meles regime. This essay will first identify and explore the political and economic objectives of the Meles regime in Oromia. Second, it will explain how the Meles regime puts forth a discourse of democracy and development while, in fact, it engages in state terrorism, gross human rights violations, and the robbing and impoverishing of the Oromo and others in order to enrich Tigrayan elites and their collaborators. Third, this study will explain why this current Ethiopian state is against peace and development just as the previous successive Amhara-led Ethiopian governments were, and the possible outcomes of such policies. Finally, it points out the danger that the minority Tigrayan state elites have created in an attempt to establish

a minority hegemonic state in the complex and multinational society of the Horn of Africa.

THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES OF THE MELES REGIME

The ethnicized Ethiopian state with the collaboration of Euro-American allies has effectively excluded the colonized peoples and the Ethiopian masses from decision-making positions.³ This state has been controlling the colonized peoples by establishing local intermediaries like the OPDO.⁴ The current authoritarian-terrorist regime of Ethiopia⁵ is supported by the United States, major European countries, China, and the imperial interstate system while it practices authoritarianism in Abyssinia proper (the Amhara-Tigray homelands), terrorism on colonized regions such as Oromia, Ogadenia, Sidama, Gambella, and also it conducts recurrent wars with its neighbors of Eritrea and Somalia.

The Ethiopian colonial system has taken away the sovereignty of the Oromo people and other colonized peoples of the Horn and has impoverished them by denying them their fundamental human rights and needs that Ron Shiffman calls subsistence, protection or security,

³For further explanation, see Asafa Jalata, *Oromia & Ethiopia: State Formation and Ethnonational Conflict 1868-2004*, second edition, (Trenton, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 2005).

⁴See Asafa Jalata, *Fighting Against the Injustice of the State and Globalization: Comparing the African American and Oromo Movements*, (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

⁵The Ethiopian state has been authoritarian to Amhara and Tigrayan communities since it has been against democracy, and it has been a terrorist government against the colonized peoples like the Oromos because it has been ruling by practicing state terrorism and massive human rights violations. In this 21st 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.

and understanding.⁶ Most people in urban and rural areas have low levels of subsistence because they do not have adequate incomes, enough food, and livable homes.⁷ The Oromo and others have been ruled by successive authoritarian-terrorist regimes, which have exploited and impoverished them by expropriating their resources and by denying them subsistence and security.⁸ Successive Ethiopian regimes have never displayed humanity or respect for the colonized peoples since they have considered them to be inferior peoples undeserving of basic human rights.⁹ The Oromo and others have been denied their inalienable rights to self-determination and democracy and also have been denied opportunities to build their social, economic, political, cultural and organizational infrastructures.

The Meles regime implements its political and economic objectives through a variety of strategies and tactics; it is highly militarized and repressive, and it tightly controls information and resources by manipulating and using 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.¹⁰ The

⁶Ron Shiffman, "Urban Poverty - The Global Phenomenon of Poverty and Social Marginalization in Our Cities: Facts and Strategies, 1995, <http://www.picced.org/advocacy/poverty.htm>, 1995, pp. 6-8.

⁷They 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.

⁸For further discussion, see Asafa Jalata, "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.

⁹See Asafa Jalata, *Fighting Against the Injustice of the State and Globalization*, *ibid*.

¹⁰For further discussion, see Asafa Jalata, "U. S. - Sponsored Ethiopian 'Democracy' and State Terrorism," in *Crisis and Terror in the Horn of Africa*. Edited by Pat Lauderdale, A. Zegeye and A.

Meles government uses the Tigrayan-dominated army, the police, security networks, and the OPDO as well as the media to attack the OLF and all self-aware Oromos in order to destroy independent Oromo national leadership and to deny the Oromo nation any political voice on all levels. It also impoverishes the Oromo, thus exposing them to hunger, malnutrition, and disease.

Despite the fact that successive Amhara-dominated governments colonized, dominated, and exploited the Oromo and other peoples, they did not create their own special homeland within Abyssinia proper for the purpose of transferring the resources of the colonized peoples, particularly to their ethnonational group in their homeland. Instead, they created an empire they later called Ethiopia by using images of Amhara and Orthodox Christianity. By contrast, the regime of Meles Zenawi has created an autonomous Tigrayan homeland and reduced Oromia to the status of periphery to this emerging prosperous homeland. The political objectives of Tigrayan state elites is to make the Oromo nation leaderless through state terrorism and systematic killings to use its natural and labor resources to enrich Tigrayan rulers and their collaborators, and to develop Tigray at the cost of Oromia and other regions.

Since the Oromo people have been resisting to Tigrayan colonial policies, they have been targeted by the Meles regime; they have been also repressed, attacked, and terrorized because of their economic resources, their acceptance of the OLF as their national leadership, and their refusal to submit to the orders of Tigrayan authorities and their collaborators who try to hide their political and economic objectives under the rhetoric of democracy, self-determination, and federalism. As we know from history, the policy of targeting and exterminating indigenous peoples exists in different parts of the world, and it has been

Oliverio, (Burlington: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 64-89. See also Catherine Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia: Race, Violence, and the Legacy of Slavery*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1999), pp. 2-25.

an integral practice of the racialized capitalist world system since the sixteenth century. While claiming to promote Christian civilization, modernity, and commerce, European colonialists exterminated indigenous peoples in the Americas, Australia, Asia, and Africa over a period of several centuries in order to transfer their resources to European colonial settlers and their descendants.

Specifically, the plans and actions King Leopold of Belgium had for the Congo or Andrew Jackson of the United States for the Cherokees or colonial Germany for the Herero and Nama peoples in South West Africa (Nambia)¹¹ are very similar to the grand plan the

¹¹In his book *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*, Adam Hochschild (1998) vividly explains how King Leopold II of Belgium terrorized the people of Congo by dispossessing their lands and reducing them to semi-slaves in order to force them to collect ivory and harvest wild rubber. While claiming developing the Congo Free States and promoting a humanitarian cause, King Leopold II established policies that resulted in the destruction of more than five million Africans by murder, diseases, and hunger. His Force Publique Officers led by a few Belgians and staffed by the natives committed horrendous crimes against humanity by burning villages, hanging, torturing, raping, flogging, and mutilating in order to terrorize the people and force them to work for the king. This organization is similar to the organization of Meles Zenawi called the OPDO that imposes a reign of terror on the Oromo people. Similarly, in his book, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur*, Ben Kiernan (2007) explains how it took four centuries to decimate the indigenous peoples of the Americas through war, genocide, terrorism, diseases, and removal. He particularly discusses how the president of the United States, Andrew Jackson, destroyed the Cherokee Nation by removing them from their homelands and sending them to reservations. Jackson and his supporters and white settlers created civil war among the leadership of the Cherokee and made them to fight each other. In *The Trail of Tears and Indian Removal*, Amy H. Sturgis (2007) explores how the United States practiced racial or ethnic cleansing on the Cherokee nation. When the Cherokee people were removed from Georgia between 1838 and 1839, about eight hundred Cherokee perished, and they arrived in Oklahoma without any children and only a few elders. When the Herero and Nama peoples of Nambia resisted

Meles government has for the Oromo. The Meles regime is now completing the forced removal of Oromos from the areas surrounding Finfinne (Addis Ababa).¹² By evicting some Oromo farmers from their homelands with little compensation, the Meles regime has already leased several millions of hectares of Oromo lands to foreign investors such as the Chinese, Arabs, Indians, Malaysians, and European business people and local capitalists.¹³ Today, when the Oromos are facing abject poverty and hunger, Tigrayan elites who depended on international food aid in the 1980s for their survival are rich and powerful. The political and military leaders of the Meles government are literally gangsters and robbers; they use state power to expropriate state corporations and lands in the name of privatization—all with the blessing of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. As we shall see shortly, in achieving its political and economic objectives, the Meles regime has and continues to engage in political repression, state terrorism, and gross human rights violations in Oromia and other regional states.

POLITICAL REPRESSION AND STATE TERRORISM

The overthrowing of the Amhara-led Ethiopian military government by the Eritrean, Oromo, and Tigrayan liberation fronts in 1991 brought

Germany colonialism, the German soldiers and settlers developed a plan to carry out a shoot-to-kill policy. They conducted extrajudicial killings, established concentration camps, and employed forced labor and death camps. The German colonial governor expressed the plan of Germany: "15 years from now, there will not be much left of the natives" (quoted in Kiernan, 2007: 381). This plan was implemented between 1904 and 1905 when the majority of Herero and Nama were exterminated. For further discussion, see Edwin Herbert, *Small Wars and Skirmishes 1902–18*, (Nottingham, Great Britain: Foundry Books, 2003).

¹² See for example, Kenate Worku, "The Expansion of Addis Ababa and its Impact on the Surrounding Areas: A Preliminary Study of the Nefas Silk Lafto District," *The Journal of Oromo Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2, July 2008, pp. 97-131.

¹³This problem is not yet fully studied.

hope to the decaying Ethiopian Empire. This hope was dashed within a year when the Meles government, supported by regional and global powers, started to express its political ambition through political violence. While engaging in political violence in the form of state terrorism, state rape, and other forms of violence to control the Oromo people, Tigrayan state elites started to claim that they were promoting democracy, federalism, and national self-determination. Since the Tigrayan-dominated Ethiopian government is weak, illegitimate, and lacks accountability and professionalism, it engages in all forms of political violence to protect its power and to loot Oromo economic resources.¹⁴

The Meles government mainly targets the Oromo for destruction because the Oromo have been challenging the regime and its policies under the leadership of the OLF. Since the Oromo are the largest ethnonational group (estimated to be half of the eighty million people in Ethiopia) and Oromia is the key to Ethiopia's political economy, the Tigrayan state elites have had political nightmares about the Oromo and their national struggle. Consequently, the Meles regime started to deny political space for the Oromo people in 1992 when it "closed more than two hundred OLF campaign offices and imprisoned and killed hundreds of OLF cadres and supporters ahead of the elections

¹⁴Bridget Welsh 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 involve in political violence and engage in genocidal massacres to suppress the population groups that struggle for political and economic rights. Bridget Welsh, "Globalization, Weak States, and Death Toll in East Asia," *Violence and Politics: Globalization's Paradox*, edited by Kenton Worcester, Sally Avery Bermanzohn, and Mark Ungar, (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 67-68.

scheduled to take place on June 21, 1992."¹⁵ As Lisa Sharlach explains, 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."¹⁶

In 1992, the Meles regime claimed to have imprisoned 22,000 OLF members, supporters, and sympathizers in the concentration camps of Didheesa in Wallaga, Agarfa in Bale, Blate in Sidamo, and Hurso in Hararge.¹⁷ However, a credible source estimated that between forty-five thousand and fifty thousand Oromos were imprisoned in these concentration camps from 1992 to 1994, and three thousand of them died from torture, malnutrition, diarrhea, malaria, and other diseases.¹⁸ Hassan Ali, an Oromo collaborator of the regime who was appointed as the first president of Oromia between 1992 and 1995 by Meles, exposed the contradiction between the regime's claims of a democratic discourse and its terrorist practices through its army, the police, and security networks. After he fled and resettled in the U.S., he said the following:

The TPLF soldiers and its members are a law unto themselves. Only what they say and what they want is implemented in Oromia to the general exclusion of Oromo interests or wishes . . . Although Oromia is autonomous in name, the government soldiers and secret service agents have total power to do whatever they want in Oromia. They imprison, torture, or kill anyone, including OPDO members and our

¹⁵Mohammed Hassen, "Conquest, Tyranny, and Ethnocide against the Oromo," *Northeast African Studies*, Volume 9, Number 3. 2002, p. 28.

¹⁶Lisa Sharlach, "State Rape: Sexual Violence as genocide," *Violence and Politics: Globalization's Paradox*, *ibid*, p. 107.

¹⁷*Ibid*, p. 32.

¹⁸Susan Pollack, "Ethiopia: Human Tragedy in the making," *The Oromo Commentary* 5, no. 1 (1996), p. 12.

government employees without any due process of law. They have established several secret detention centers, where thousands of innocent people are kept for years without trial or charge. Federal government soldiers, more appropriately the TPLF soldiers, are in practice above the rule of law in Oromia.¹⁹

This regime has banned independent Oromo organizations including the OLF since 1992 and declared war on those organizations and the Oromo people. It even has outlawed Oromo journalists and other writers and closed down Oromo newspapers. As Mohammed Hassen asserts:

The attack on the free press has literally killed the few publications in the Oromo language in the Latin alphabet. The death of Oromo publications . . . has been a fatal blow to the flowering of Oromo literature and the standardization of the Oromo language itself. The Oromo magazines that have disappeared include *Gada*, *Biftu*, *Madda Walaabuu*, *Odaa*, and the *Urjii* magazine . . . Since 2002, there has not been a single newspaper or magazine that has expressed the legitimate political opinions of the Oromo in Ethiopia.²⁰

The reality is that almost all of Oromo journalists are either in prison or have been killed, or are in exile. The regime also later banned Oromo musical groups and all professional associations.²¹

The regime has engaged in fraudulent elections in 1992, 1994, 1995, 2000, 2005, and maybe in 2010. Despite this it achieved recognition from the international community for its supposed

¹⁹Quoted in Mohammed Hassen, *ibid*, p. 33.

²⁰Mohammed Hassen, *ibid*, p. 31.

²¹The Meles government has left the Oromo nation without independent organizations and institutions. Only the organizations and the media that are owned or controlled by the Tigrayan government have remained intact, further serving to impose the Tigrayan colonial and racist authority in Oromia and other colonized regions.

adherence to the principles of democracy and human rights. It has targeted all sectors of Oromo society in order to destroy the foundation of Oromo nationalism and political struggle. After the May 2005 elections, the Meles regime murdered more than one hundred ninety-three demonstrators and imprisoned thousands of them in Finfinne and others cities because they were peacefully protesting the regime's vote-rigging. According to Getachew Jigi, a former member of the Ethiopian rubber stamp parliament, more than four hundred Oromos were killed and thousands of them were imprisoned.²² Nobody knows exactly how many people the regime killed or imprisoned in rural areas since the regime did not allow the reporting of such information. *Human Rights Watch* notes that in "Oromia, the largest and most populous state in Ethiopia, systematic political repression and pervasive human rights violations have denied citizens the freedom to associate and to freely form and express their political ideas."²³

When Oromo students demonstrated across Oromia to oppose the denial of self-determination and the massive human rights violations of the Oromo people from March to May 2002, the government detained, interrogated, and tortured hundreds of Oromo business people, students, teachers, and members of the Macca-Tulama Self-Help Association — branding them supporters of the OLF.²⁴ Several thousands of Oromo high school, college, and university students protested all over Oromia demanding self-determination for the Oromo people, opposing the brutalities of the Ethiopian army and police against civilians, demanding the removal of armed colonial settlers in Oromia, and rejecting the new educational policy that was limiting the

²²Dr. Getachew Jigi's Paltalk speech in Galma Qabisso Bilisummaa Oromoo, August 30, 2009.

²³*Human Rights Watch*, "Suppressing Dissent Human Rights Abuses and Political Repression in Ethiopia's Oromia Region," May 2005 Vol. 17, No. 7 (A), p. 1.

²⁴See Asafa Jalata, "The Impact of Ethiopian State Terrorism," pp. 35-37.

education of Oromo children to the tenth grade. They also protested to expose and oppose the policies that were undermining the development of Oromo language and culture. Furthermore, they criticized the imposition of high taxes, the burdening of farmers with high fertilizer costs, the existence of the terrorist group called Galla Gadayi (killers of Oromos) that killed Oromo children. These students also opposed the human rights abuses against Oromo nationalists, particularly artists and journalists, and they demanded the restoration of private Oromo newspapers. To quiet down these peaceful and democratic demands, the regime responded by arresting, killing, and torturing these protesting students.²⁵

The more the regime has continued to repress the democratic rights of the Oromo and others, the more Oromo students have continued to resist. From January to May 2004, Oromo students across Oromia from secondary schools to colleges protested against the dismissal of about three hundred eighty Oromo students from Finfinnee University and the change of the Oromo capital from Finfinnee to Adama (Nazareth). During these protests, government forces killed at least eleven students, arrested more than seven thousand students and teachers, and disrupted both secondary and higher education in Oromia.²⁶ Saman Zia-Zarifi, Academic Freedom Director for Human Rights Watch, referring to the killing of these students says, "Shooting at unarmed students is a shameful misuse of government power."²⁷ The government detained Oromo teachers using the accusation that they had instigated the protests because of their support for the OLF.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *The Oromia Support Group*, "Press Release," July 2004, no. 40, p. 2

²⁷ Saman Zia-Zarifi, "Ethiopia: Halt Crackdown on Oromo Students," Human Rights Watch, <http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/05/ethiopia052202.html>. (2004), p. 1.

Government forces raped some female students in prison.²⁸ Detained "students were forced to run barefooted and crawl on their knees on coarse gravel spending the night on bare concrete floors."²⁹ Several Oromo students perished in prison due to the torture and lack of medical treatment and adequate food.

The Meles regime also targeted officials and members of the Macca-Tulama Self-Help Association after making the accusation that they had links with the OLF and the protesting Oromo students. Ethiopian government security men closed the association's office in Finfinnee, confiscated documents and properties, and imprisoned the chairman and vice chairman, Dirribi Demissie Bokku, and Gamachu Fayeera respectively, and other officers on May 18, 2004.³⁰ Finally, the association was suppressed and made non-functional. According to *Human Rights Watch*, "In July 2004, the Ethiopian government revoked the license of the venerable Oromo self-help association Mecha Tulema [sic] for allegedly carrying out 'political activities' in violations of its charter. The police subsequently arrested four of the organization's leaders on charges of 'terrorism' and providing support to the OLF. The four were released on bail in August [2004] but were arbitrarily arrested a week later."³¹ Expanding their political repression, regional authorities formed quasi-government institutions known as *gott* and *garee* to maintain tighter political control of Oromia; they "imposed these new structures on . . . [rural] communities More disturbing, regional authorities are using the *gott* and *garee* to monitor the speech and personal lives of the rural population, to restrict and control the movements of residents, and to enforce farmers'

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

³¹ Human Rights Watch, "Ethiopia: Overview of Human Rights Issues," <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/01/13/ethiop9833.htm>. (2005), pp. 1-2.

attendance at 'meetings' that are thinly disguised OPDO political rallies."³²

Generally speaking, the Meles government has continued to eliminate or imprison politically conscious and self-respecting Oromos. Today, thousands of Oromos are in official and secret prisons simply because of their nationality and their resistance to injustice. After being jailed and released from prison after six years, Seye Abraha,³³ the former Defense Minister of the regime, who had previously participated in massacring and imprisoning thousands of Oromos, testified on January 5, 2008, to his audience in the state of Virginia in the U. S. that "*esir betu Oromigna yinager*," ("the prison speaks Oromiffa [the Oromo language]") and also noted that "about 99% of the prisoners in Qaliti are Oromos."³⁴ In addition to tactics of illegal imprisoning, the Meles regime also uses state terrorism to discourage the Oromo people from participating in their national movement led by the OLF.

The Meles regime terrorizes the Oromo people to establish Tigrayan hegemony and to dominate and exploit Oromian resources. The Tigrayan state elites believe that Oromo intellectuals, businessmen and women, conscious Oromo farmers, students, and community and religious leaders are their enemies, and, hence, should be eliminated. State terrorism is associated with issues of control over territory and resources and the construction of political and ideological

domination.³⁵ It manifests in the Ethiopian Empire in different forms. The most obvious manifestation of terrorism is violence through the actions of war, assassination, murder, castration, burying alive, throwing off cliffs, hanging, torture, rape, and poisoning, forcing people to submission by intimidation, beating, and disarmament of citizens.³⁶ The methods of killing include burning, bombing, the cutting of throats or arteries in the neck, strangulation, shooting, and the burying of people up to their necks in the ground. The agents and militia of Meles have burned houses and entire villages, exterminating hundreds of Oromo men, women, and children.

Furthermore, the Meles regime practices different forms of torture on imprisoned Oromos and others. 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

³⁵ Annamarie Oliverio explains 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" Annamarie Oliverio, "The State of Injustice," *ibid*, p. 52.

³⁶ See Sue Pollock, "Ethiopia-Human Tragedy in the Making: Democracy or Dictatorship?" *The Oromia Support Group*, 1996; Sue Pollock, "Politics and Conflict: Participation and Self-determination in 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; Trevor Trueman, "Democracy or dictatorship," in *Ethiopia, ibid*, pp. 141-150; See U.S. Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 1991-2007; Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch/Africa, 1991-2007; *The Oromia Support Group*, 1997).

³² Human Rights Watch, May 2005, Vol. 17, No. 7 (A), p. 2.

³³ Seye Abraha was a founder and former political bureau member of the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front. He was a chauvinist Tigrayan who did not hide his negative attitudes about the Oromos and the OLF, when he was the Defense Minister of Ethiopia.

³⁴ See "The Prison speaks Oromiffa," *Ethiopian Review*, January 17, 2008. Seye was jailed in Qaliti prison.

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. There were also prisoners who were forced into pits so that fire could be made on top of them. The cadres, soldiers, and officials of the regime frequently raped Oromo girls and women to demoralize them and their communities and to show how Tigrayan rulers and their collaborators wielded limitless power. Bruna Fossati, Lydia Namarra and Peter Niggli have reported that "in prison women are often humiliated and mistreated in the most brutal fashion. Torturers ram poles or bottles into their vaginas, connect electrodes to the lips of their vulva, or the victims are dragged into the forest and gang-raped by interrogation officers."³⁷ Ethiopian soldiers have even collected young Oromo girls and women into concentration camps and gang raped them in front of their relatives, fathers, brothers, and husbands to humiliate them and the Oromo people.

Similar incidents have occurred wherever terrorism and genocide have been practiced. Lisa Sharlack explains that as a campaign to commit terrorism and genocide, the West Pakistan army raped thousands of the Bangladesh women, the Serbian army raped the women of Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo, and the Hutu men raped the Tutsi girls and women.³⁸ In addition to the effects of mental and bodily torture, through raping women and girls, the TPLF soldiers and officers have been spreading diseases such as syphilis, gonorrhea, and HIV/AIDS into Oromo society. One study on issues surrounding HIV/AIDS in Ethiopian military personnel demonstrates that their frequent movements, exposition to casual sex with prostitutes,

war, and social disorganization put them at high risk for acquiring and spreading sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS.³⁹

State-sanctioned rape is a form of terrorism. The use of sexual violence is a tactic of societal destruction that a dominant ethnonational group practices in order to destroy a subordinate ethnonational group. What Catherine MacKinnon says about ethnic cleansing in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina applies to the sexual abuse of Oromo women by the Tigrayan-led regime:

It is also rape unto death, rape as massacre, rape to kill and to make the victims wish they were dead. It is rape as an instrument of forced exile, rape to make you leave your home and never want to go back. It is rape to be seen and heard and watched and told to others: rape as spectacle. It is rape to drive a wedge through a community, to shatter a society, to destroy a people.⁴⁰

The Tigrayan-led regime has used various mechanisms in repressing, controlling and destroying the Oromo people. It has imprisoned or killed thousands of Oromo women and men. Its agents have murdered prominent community leaders and left their corpses for hyenas by denying them burial to impose terror on the Oromo people. Furthermore, relatives of the murdered Oromos are not allowed to cry publicly to express their grievances, a once cultural practice. For example, the wife of Ahmed Mohamed Kuree, a seventy year-old elderly farmer, expressed on February 21, 2007, on the Voice of

³⁷ Bruna Fossati, L. Namarra, and Peter Niggli, *The New Rulers of Ethiopia and the Persecution of the Oromo: Reports from the Oromo Refugees in Djibouti*, (Dokumentation, Evangelischer Pressedienst, Frankfurt am Main, 1996, p. 10 1996).

³⁸ Lisa Sharlack, "State Rape: Sexual Violence as Genocide," *ibid*, p. 107.

³⁹For details, see Ludmila N. Bakhireva, Yegeremu Abebe, Stephanie K. Bordine, et la, "Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome Knowledge and Risk in Ethiopian Military Personnel," *Military Medicine*, 169, 3: 221-226, 2004.

⁴⁰Catharine MacKinnon, "Rape, Genocide, and Women's Human Rights," *Harvard Women's Law, Journal* 17, 1994, pp. 11-12.

America, Afaan Oromo Program, the following:⁴¹ "We found his prayer beads, his clothes and a single bone of his which the hyenas had 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 my 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 Oromos and left their corpses on the mountain of Suufi in Eastern Oromia. Ahmed Mohamed Kuree was one of these Oromos. Another Oromo, Ayisha Ali, a fourteen year-old teenager, was also killed and eaten by hyenas. Her mother said on the Voice of America, Afaan Oromo Program, the following:

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, underwear and her hair, braided . . . That was all we found of my daughter's remains.

Ayisha was probably raped before she was killed. 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.

The Meles regime has even targeted Oromia's environment and its animals. According to Mohammed Hassen:

Oromo men, women, children, animals, and even the Oromo environment are all targets of the TPLF's tyranny. In cases where Oromo pastoralists were suspected of harboring OLF guerrilla fighters, TPLF soldiers punished them by destroying or confiscating their cattle or by poisoning the wells from which the cattle drank. On many occasions Oromo farmers, suspected of feeding OLF fighters, saw their farms burned to the ground and the defenseless members of their households brutally murdered. In 2000, when the TPLF government suspected OLF guerrillas of hiding in the forests of Oromia, its agents set fires that caused catastrophic environmental destruction in Oromia and other states in southern Ethiopia.⁴²

This regime has engaged in terrorism and gross human rights violations with little or no opposition from Western powers, particularly the United States. All these crimes against humanity are committed in the name of democracy and development.

Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn identify two major types of societal destruction:⁴³ the first type is used to colonize and maintain an empire by terrorizing people perceived to be real or potential enemies. In this case, the main purpose of practicing societal destruction is to acquire land and other valuable resources. Then the maintenance of colonial domination by state elites requires the establishment of a cultural and ideological hegemony that can be practiced through destruction and repression. By destroying elements of a population that resists colonial domination, hegemony can be established on the

⁴¹The translation into English was made by <http://Oromoaffairs.blogspot.com/>

⁴²Mohammed Hassen, "Conquest, Tyranny, and Ethnocide against the Oromo," pp.37-38.

⁴³*Ibid.*

surviving population. This is the second type of societal destruction through repression. Jonassohn notes that ideological repression develops "in nation-states where ethnic groups develop chauvinistic ideas about their superiority and exclusiveness."⁴⁴ The Tigrayan-led government sees Oromia as part of its empire, controls all of Oromia's resources, and attacks the Oromo since it perceives them as its potential or real enemies. It engages in terrorism and repression with the intention of destroying the part of the Oromo nation composed of nationalists and leaders.

The Tigrayan state elites are claiming to promote political ideologies such as "revolutionary democracy" and "federalism," while at gunpoint attempting to legitimize Tigrayan ethocracy and state power. They deny that they engage in massive human rights violations by claiming that they are democrats and revolutionaries and by also destroying the records of their political crimes. Jonassohn's description of a conspiracy of "collective denial" of societal destruction is applicable to the denial of the occurrence of terrorism and massive human rights violations in the Ethiopian empire. According to Jonassohn, "There are many reasons for this: (a) in many societies such materials are not written down, or are destroyed rather than preserved in archives; (b) many perpetrators have recourse to elaborate means of hiding the truth, controlling access to information, and spreading carefully contrived disinformation; and (c) historically, most [societal destructions] were not reported because . . . there appears to have existed a sort of conspiracy of 'collective denial' whereby the disappearance of a people did not seem to require comment or even mention."⁴⁵

⁴⁴Kurt Jonassohn, *ibid*, p. 23.

⁴⁵*Ibid*, p. 11.

While the Tigrayan regime attempts to eliminate Oromo elites through violence in order to deny the Oromo their own political leadership, it prepares Tigrayan children for positions of leadership by providing them access to better education while denying appropriate educational opportunities for Oromo children. Although it is impossible to know exactly at this time how many Oromos have been murdered by the Meles government —since it is a government that hides such information— Historian Mohammed Hassen estimates that between 1992 and 2001, about 50,000 killings and 16,000 disappearances (euphemism for secret killings) took place in Oromia; he also notes that 90 percent of the killings were not reported.⁴⁶ The Meles government hides its criminal activities and "does not keep written records of its extrajudicial executions and prolonged detention of political prisoners."⁴⁷ Furthermore, the massive killings committed on the Sheko, Mezhenger, Sidama, Annuak, and Ogaden Somali peoples have shocked some sections of the international community.⁴⁸

According to the Associated Press, Meles Zenawi and his followers are possible targets of the International Criminal Court (ICC)

⁴⁶Mohammed Hassen "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.

⁴⁷*Ibid*, p.30.

⁴⁸In 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 Hawas (Awash). 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. Currently, the regime is engaged in genocidal massacres, imprisonment, and massive human rights violations in Ogadenia and Oromia.

as are many leaders of African countries.⁴⁹ The president of Genocide Watch, Gregory Stanton, wrote on March 23, 2009, an open letter to the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights admiring the action that the ICC took in issuing a warrant for the arrest of President Omar al-Bashir of the Sudan and calling upon them to investigate the crimes Meles and his government have committed and still are committing against humanity in the Horn of Africa:

The action that the International Criminal Court has taken in this situation has restored hope to peace and justice loving people, affirming that international human rights law not only exists on paper, but in reality. It also sends an important message to perpetrators throughout the world that impunity for their crimes is not assured forever; which may be a primary reason that one of the first leaders to defend Omar al-Bashir and condemn the warrant was Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, whose government has also been implicated in a pattern of widespread perpetration of serious human rights atrocities in Ethiopia and in Somalia. He and those within his government may be keenly aware of their own vulnerability to similar actions by the ICC in the future that could upend a deeply entrenched system of government-supported impunity that has protected perpetrators from any accountability.⁵⁰

Gregory Stanton demonstrates in this letter how the Meles government has committed heinous crimes by being involved “in the inciting, the empowerment or the perpetration of crimes against humanity, war crimes and even genocide, often justified by them as ‘counter-insurgency.’” The Meles regime recently passed the so-called

⁴⁹ Associate Press, 2009, p. 1.

⁵⁰ Stanton, George. 2009. “An Open Letter to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,” Website: www.genocidewatch.org, accessed on April 1, 2009.

anti-terrorism law to legalize its crimes against humanity and to legally intensify its own repressive and terrorist activities. Ethiopia’s anti-terrorism “law could provide the Ethiopian government with a potent instrument to crack down on political dissent, including peaceful political demonstrations and public criticisms of government policy that are deemed supportive of armed opposition activity.”⁵¹

However, Western countries including the U.S. and their internal organizations support Meles Zenawi claiming that he is democratic; they ignore the crimes he and his government commit against humanity. Parade Magazine identifies Meles as one of the twenty world’s worst dictators.⁵² His government also abuses American citizens in Oromia and Ethiopia. For instance, the U.S. government even did not take any action when three armed men of the Ethiopian National Intelligence Agency terrorized fourteen American volunteer students and their Oromo coordinator, Hamid Muudee, on July 9, 2009 by imprisoning the students at gunpoint and expelling them and their Oromo coordinator from Oromia, Ethiopia, within twenty-four hours. The crime of these students was teaching English to Oromo students in Haramaya, eastern Oromia. Rory Linnane, one of the students, expresses her experience as follows: “A strong hand planted stiffly on my shoulder and sent shivers through my body, freezing every muscle as I stood on my host family’s front lawn in Ethiopia. I slowly turned as my eyes traveled up a large arm and over to the other arm, which was grasping an AK-47. I looked up at his face as he glanced back at two other armed men and his lips parted into a grin.”⁵³ She also

⁵¹ Human Rights Watch, “An Analysis of Ethiopia’s Draft Anti-Terrorism Law,” updated June 30, 2009, p. 1.

⁵² David Wallenchinsky, “More of the World’s Worst Dictators,” *Parade Magazine*, 03/22/2009.

⁵³ Rory Linnane, “Captured in Ethiopia: An American nightmare,” *The Daily Cardinal: University of Wisconsin – Madison*, August 26, 2009,

comments "as an American citizen on Ethiopian soil, I had no more rights than the Ethiopian people."⁵⁴ So Meles and his government have made Oromia and Ethiopia prison houses and the darkest and most evil corners of the world.

Generally speaking, the political repression, state terrorism, and massive massacres practiced by the Meles regime have forced millions of Oromos to become political refugees in neighboring countries, the Middle East, Europe, and North America. Suspecting that these refugees support the Oromo national movement, the regime has been trying to control and quell their activities. The alliance of the West with this regime has frightened neighboring countries such as Djibouti, Kenya and Sudan and turned them against the Oromo struggle and Oromo refugees. Using the leverage of Western countries, the Meles regime has pressured neighboring governments to return or expel Oromo refugees from their countries. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has even failed to provide reasonable protection for thousands of Oromo refugees in Djibouti, Kenya, and Sudan. For example, on December 21 and 22, 2000, while five thousand Oromo refugees were refouled to Ethiopia, the UNHCR office in Djibouti denied that any violation of its mandate had occurred.⁵⁵ Between 2000 and 2004, hundreds of Oromo refugees were forced to return to Ethiopia from Djibouti to face imprisonment or death.⁵⁶ "The continuing refoulement of refugees from Djibouti," notes the Oromia Support Group, "especially the large scale refoulement of December 2000 and the 28 associated deaths by asphyxiation and

shooting, should be publicly acknowledged by UNHCR and the Djibouti government."⁵⁷

Similarly, Oromo refugees in Kenya and Sudan have faced refoulement and security problems. Kenyan security forces and a Habasha terrorist organization called Hagere Fiqir (love of country) have been continually harassing Oromo refugees in Kenya. Ethiopian government agents and this terrorist organization harassed or attacked Oromo refugees in Nairobi and Kakuma refugee campus. Sudan, which was once sympathetic to Oromo refugees and the Oromo struggle, changed its policy after 1991. The Ethiopian Political Prisoners Committee reported that Sudan, violating the UN Convention on Refugees, forced refugees to return to Ethiopia in January 2003 and revealed that one hundred ten minors were sold in the Middle East and some European countries.⁵⁸ Women and children refugees are more exposed to danger of abuse and exploitation in neighboring countries in the Middle East. Particularly, the burdens of Oromo women refugees are heavy; many of them are raped while crossing the border on the way to Djibouti or are forced to work as slaves by Djibouti households or the Djibouti police. As Sebida Musa asserts, "They take the women home and treat them as their personal property. If one of the women gets pregnant, she is mercilessly thrown out into the street, where she and her unwanted child have to try to survive by begging."⁵⁹

Generally, Oromo refugees have been abused by the authorities of Djibouti and the Ethiopian government and such abuses has been ignored by international organizations such as UNHCR. In addition to denying food to Oromo children, they are also denied education in Djibouti. Zeinaba Ibrahim, an Oromo woman refugee, says "Our difficulty is that as Oromos we are threatened and endangered both at

http://www.dailycardinal.com/frontend/article/print_version/23212?images=true, accessed on 8/28/2009.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵The Oromia Support Group, "Press Release," December 2002, no. 38, p. 17.

⁵⁶Ibid, July 2003, no. 39, pp. 16-18.

⁵⁷Ibid, December 2002, no. 38, pp. 18-20; July 2003, no. 39, pp. 18-19.

⁵⁸Cited in *ibid*, July 2003, no. 39, p. 20.

⁵⁹Ibid, p. 28.

home in Ethiopia and as refugees in Djibouti."⁶⁰ Probably following the instructions of the Ethiopian and Djibouti governments or due to their fear of these governments, the UNHCR provides minimal material support to Oromo refugees in Djibouti. Fossati, Namarra and Niggli note the following: "The Oromo council of elders told us that they believed they were entitled to a small portion of the international aid available to refugees, but did not even get a glass of water from the UNHCR and had been completely forgotten. All the Oromo that we spoke to complained again and again that they were so poor that it was even difficult to bury their dead properly. The community, they said, should at least be able to guarantee a burial, since it is the one thing a human being cannot do for himself."⁶¹

The Kenyan government, too, has failed to protect its Oromo refugees and also its own Oromo citizens. Hussein Sora, a young Kenyan Oromo lawyer, accused the Meles regime of international terrorism and compiled a report on the criminal activities since 1992 of Ethiopian security forces in Kenya. According to this report, the TPLF forces assassinated prominent Oromo refugees bombed the houses of some Kenyan Oromos, abducted civil servants, and shot citizens of Kenya.⁶² This lawyer died the same year he compiled and distributed his report to Kenyan authorities and international organizations. It is suspected that agents of the Ethiopian government murdered him by poisoning him. The TPLF forces have continued to enter into Kenya to murder and loot the economic resources of some Kenyan Oromos claiming that those Oromos were harboring the Oromo Liberation Army.

By crossing borders and entering Somalia and Kenya, agents of the Ethiopian regime have been assassinating prominent Oromo leaders

such as Jatani Ali, Mulis Abba Gada,⁶³ and Sheik Mohammed Saido between 1991 and 2007. And still today, the regime is killing prominent Oromos in Kenya and Somalia. Just in 2007 and 2008, Ethiopian security forces assassinated Oromos in Somalia and Kenya. One human rights organization notes that on February 5, 2008, the combined security forces of Ethiopia and Puntland, Somalia, bombed two hotels owned by two Oromo refugees and consequently murdered sixty-five Oromo refugees and seriously injured more than one hundred people.⁶⁴ When it comes to the Oromo, international organizations do not pay attention even if terrorist attacks occur and international laws are broken. The Oromo are being denied sanctuary in neighboring countries and are also even being denied the right to be refugees. Since Oromo refugees are not welcomed by neighboring countries and international organizations, there are thousands of 'internal' Oromo refugees in Oromia and Ethiopia. Fleeing from Ethiopian state terrorism, these internal refugees hide in the bushes and remote villages. Suspecting that these internal refugees support the Oromo national struggle, the regime attempts to control their movements and the movement of other Oromos. Overall, the Meles regime engages in massive political repression, state terrorism, and massacres to control Oromia and other regions and to exploit their economic and natural resources. Considering all of these massive human rights violations and the crimes committed against humanity, we can assert that the Ethiopian state is the enemy of peace and development both in Oromia and Ethiopia.

THE ETHIOPIAN STATE AS THE ENEMY OF PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

⁶³Mulis Abba Gada was one of the Oromo heroes who initiated the Oromo movement, and he was a member of the Oromo Liberation Front National Council. A Tigrayan assassin squad in Somalia shot him in 2000.

⁶⁴http://www.humanrightsleague.com/press_Releases.html, 2008.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*

⁶¹*Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁶²Cited in *The Oromia Support Group*, p. 79.

For more than a century, successive Ethiopian regimes have depended on external powers, have lacked internal political legitimacy, and have brutalized individuals and groups in the Ethiopian Empire through policies and practices of authoritarianism and state terrorism. Despite the fact that successive Amhara-Tigrayan state elites have claimed that their state, history, culture, religion, and civilization are something of superior quality, Ethiopia is known more for its recurrent famines, internal and external wars, backwardness, poverty, and underdevelopment. Ethiopia has remained an empire of darkness, poverty, and ignorance and the leadership of Amhara and Tigrayan society has failed to care about their country, society, and development. Throughout history, their ideological claims of Solomonic myth, Christianity, socialism, or democracy could not hide their political actions and behavior. The Ethiopian state is used by gangsters as an instrument to enrich some elites and to punish those who oppose them.

Successive Ethiopian regimes have imposed their political power on their subjects through the barrel of the gun. The survival of these regimes has mainly depended on political violence and assistance from global powers. Consequently, the Ethiopian state has remained the organ of political repression, oppression, exploitation, terrorism, and impoverishment resulting from its lack of internal legitimacy. Ethiopian political and cultural traditions have preserved colonial arrangements and tyrannical political practices and have resisted changes in political norms, rules, and practices. Since the behavior of Abyssinian political elites has been shaped by a predatory Abyssinian political culture, the Ethiopian political system has remained tyrannical and parasitic and has failed to advance peaceful and meaningful socioeconomic development.⁶⁵

⁶⁵Tecola W. Hagos, *Democratization? Ethiopia (1991-1994): A Personal View*, (Cambridge, MA: Kheper Publishers, 1995).

The Ethiopian cultural and political system represents the worst kinds of oppressive and exploitative systems in the world; they "gave birth to some of the most degenerate leaders who obstructed very much needed social, economic and political changes."⁶⁶ The Ethiopian state has failed in securing internal legitimacy from the peoples it rules. Jennifer Milliken and Keith Krause note, "state failure is causally linked to increased and widespread humanitarian suffering, regional instability, and transnational threats of international organized crime and terrorism."⁶⁷ Although four successive governments have emerged since that of Minilik's, the Ethiopian state has remained personalized, ethnicized,⁶⁸ and dependent on big global powers, and has never become the domain of public power.

These successive regimes have imposed their political authority through political repression and state terrorism in order to have absolute control over the means of coercion (the state), material and labor resources. Because of the lack of accountability of successive Ethiopian governments, the production of the people has not been properly channeled towards development. Ethiopian state elites have used all available resources for conspicuous consumption and the

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

⁶⁷Jennifer Milliken and Keith Krause. "State Failure, State Collapse, and State Reconstruction: Concepts, Lessons and Strategies," *Development and Change*, November 2002, Vol. 33(5), p. 764.

⁶⁸In the global capitalist world system, individuals or groups who have political power use the discourse of race or ethnicity to consolidate their political power and protect their privilege. They create non-existent race and promote the ideology of racism. As the meaning of *race* is complex, so is that of racism. Racism is a discourse and a practice in which a racial/ethnonational project is politically, culturally, and 'scientifically' constructed by global and regional elites in the capitalist world system to naturalize and justify racial/ethnonational inequality in which those at the top of the hierarchy oppress and exploit those below them by claiming biological and/or cultural superiority. For further discussion, see Asafa Jalata, *Fighting Against the Injustice of the State and Globalization*, *ibid.*, pp. 8-21.

consolidation of their power over the state. Due to the low level of technological development, the productivity of the economy is very low. Consequently, the economic surplus is very limited. Hence, there is a life-and-death struggle for its appropriation. Accessibility to state power defines the major channel through which the surplus (meager resources) is siphoned off from actual producers. The competition to appropriate meager economic resources produces state violence. This is why there is no peaceful transference of power and why the struggle for political power is always violent in the Ethiopian Empire. Successive Ethiopian regimes have emerged through violence having no internal legitimacy. As a result, they have depended on powerful global powers.

Ethiopia is probably the first empire in the world where both ideologies of the West and the East have drastically failed, resulting in human tragedies. Successive state elites and their international counterparts have mainly been interested in wealth and capital accumulation which can precisely be achieved by having control over the means of coercion: the state. The state elites of the Amhara and Tigray ethnonational groups have used their ethnonational power bases to dominate state power and to exploit other peoples. T. M. Shaw asserts that "whilst officially denying and decrying 'ethnicity', ruling classes tend to use it in practice to maintain personal networks: The construction of power. The articulation of 'factionalism' has in fact been ubiquitous on the continent as ethnic connections have become the hard-core of any support nexus."⁶⁹ State violence and the ethnicization of state power in Ethiopia have prevented the construction of a legitimate democratic state that reflects a multinational society.

⁶⁹ Shaw, T.M. "Ethnicity as the Resilient Paradigm for Africa: From 1960s to 1980s," *Development and Change*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (1986), p. 589.

Due to the priorities that successive Ethiopian governments and the imperial interstate system have maintained, peaceful redefinition of social and ethnonational relations are nearly impossible today in Ethiopia. Under today's conditions, the state has been an instrument of the ruling class and the politically dominant ethnonations, because it denies the masses and the subordinated ethnonations political representation in the decision-making process. The subordinated classes, groups, and ethnonations are being denied democracy, self-determination, and political and economic rights. The result of this situation has so far been conflict, wars, massive human rights violations, environmental degradation, economic outcries, and underdevelopment. Since these Ethiopian regimes have never represented the peoples over whom they have ruled, they have failed to establish popular accountability.⁷⁰

The Amhara-Tigray elites that have dominated the state and the economy have emerged with the help of the imperial interstate system and engaged in plundering and accumulation of wealth and capital. Mohammed Mamdani notes that "state connection is a necessary precondition for membership in the African . . . [ruling class and] gives

⁷⁰For instance, in the early 1970s, Haile Selassie's regime ignored the famine crisis in Wallo that resulted in the deaths of 440,000 persons (Wolde-Mariam, 1985: 12) and even did not officially acknowledge the existence of famine (Wolde-Mariam, 1984: 102-116). Colonel Mengistu's regime, in addition to spending more than 45% of its annual budgets on military and security activities (Korn, 1986:164), spent about U.S. \$200 million in 1984 for building the convention hall, updating television equipment, decorating Addis Ababa, and for food and drink during the celebration of the creation of the so-called Workers' Party of Ethiopia and the tenth anniversary of the military officers' taking political power (Lemma, 1985: 123-124), while about 7 million farmers were facing starvation or death (Clay, Steingraber, and Niggli, 1988: 1). The military regime not only avoided helping the famine-stricken farmers, but it also did not want to report the reemergence of famine until the celebration was over. While people are suffering from famine, poverty, and war Meles and his agents are looting the resources of the empire.

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."⁷¹ The successive Ethiopian governments' failure to invest effectively the available surplus in the development of productive forces has left the peoples technologically, economically, and politically backward.

Failure to invest in the development of productive forces, internal and external wars, the discouragement of farmers due to the expropriation of their grains and animals, and conspicuous consumption of the ruling classes have all slowed the introduction of technological innovations in the agricultural production system. It is because the Ethiopian state and the imperial interstate system, spearheaded by the U.S. government, have refused to recognize this and to provide a solution to the complex processes of decolonization, self-determination and multinational democracy, that today we are witnessing conflicts, political repression, state terrorism, recurrent famines, wars, social dislocation and crises in Oromia and Ethiopia.⁷² While most of the people within Ethiopia are facing abject poverty, disease-, famines, and illiteracy, the Tigrayan-led Ethiopian regime is engaging in low-level wars against the liberation fronts of Oromia, Ogadenia, Sidama, and others and is intensifying the war of aggression

⁷¹M. Mamdani, "Peasants and Democracy in Africa," *New Left Review*, March/April, 1986, p. 47.

⁷²The 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.

against Somalia. As it did between 1998 and 2000, this regime might also go to war with Eritrea to destroy thousands of lives and spend millions of dollars. Through a series of wars this regime attempts to establish a Tigrayan political and economic hegemony in the Horn of Africa, as it did in the Ethiopian Empire. There is no doubt that the Meles regime and its global supporters are preparing the Ethiopian Empire for total collapse.

CONCLUSION

If the Ethiopian Empire is to be transformed into a viable, self-sustained, and peaceful country, establishing a multinational democratic state with internal political legitimacy through the implementation of principles of decolonization, national self-determination, and popular sovereignty must be the first political priority. This is only possible if the current ethnicized Ethiopian state is dismantled and replaced by a state that is public property and that practices the rule of law. Many people fear that if existing political, social, and economic problems⁷³ are not fairly and democratically solved as soon as possible, these problems will lead to a dangerous crisis. Hence, before it is too late, progressive intellectuals, democrats, concerned political forces, and the international community must start finding ways of addressing and solving these complex and difficult problems.

Alternatively, if the Amhara-Tigrayan elites continue to push forth an ethnicized state, the national liberation movements of colonized ethnonations should pursue together the political agenda of building a multinational democratic state that will implement the processes of decolonization, self-determination, and popular

⁷³Ethiopia is ranked 16 on 2009 failed states index. Somalia is first on this index. World Bank Publications, World Development Indicators 2009, a fifth annual collaboration between Foreign Policy and The Friend for Peace.

sovereignty. The only way to bring just, durable peace, and development to Oromia and Ethiopia and their neighbors is to replace the Ethiopian authoritarian-terrorist regime with a legitimate multinational democratic state. Without a new democratic paradigm that will allow the dominated classes, social groups, and ethnonations to have genuine representation in a state that they themselves can form and change, the existing state and continental and international political structures are inadequate in addressing and providing a solution for the complex political and economic problems of the Ethiopia Empire.⁷⁴

The Ethiopian state is failing and is on the verge of collapse. Although the Meles regime continues to survive by mainly depending on big powers and by practicing authoritarianism, terrorism, and massive human rights violations, the Oromo, Sidama, Annuak, and Ogaden-Somali national liberation movements and other political forces are continuously challenging it. As Crawford Young (1993:27-30) argues, "The world enters a period of exceptional fluidity—of the sort which historically has usually come about through the dislocation of a major war. Nation and state, as we have known them, are interrogated by history and alternative visions of the future. In this process, the politics of cultural pluralism will influence the outcomes in many important ways. In turn, the prospective impact of cultural

⁷⁴The majority of the peoples in Ethiopia are at a political crossroads: Their social and cultural systems that traditionally satisfied social and material needs had been broken up, and they could not yet establish state or states that can be responsive to their social and economic needs. The world community, nongovernmental and regional organizations, except intervening during a famine disaster and feed those populations who are starved, do not help the peoples. They do not take preventive actions. They only respond when the media start to report the existence of famine, genocide, and massive human rights violations. These acute problems did not yet get attention in Ethiopia. That is why peoples like the Oromo, Sidama, Ogaden-Somali, Annuak and others are suffering today under the authoritarian-terrorist regime of Meles Zenawi that practices hidden genocide.

pluralism beckons us to continue our quest for a more complete understanding of its inner workings."⁷⁵ Despite the fact that the Tigrayan elites or the Amhara elites are attempting to maintain Ethiopian colonialism and ethnonational hierarchies through various forms of violence, their imperial Ethiopia is in the process of destruction. In the processes of dismantling the imperial characteristics of Ethiopia and the construction of a new multinational democratic society in Oromia and Ethiopia, the Oromo people are determined to play a leading role.

The Meles regime has two options: The first is to continue its current policy supported by the West and to eventually lead the Ethiopian state to its final collapse. By maintaining its level of authoritarianism, terrorism, and massive massacres, the Meles government would only further contribute to massive social and economic crises within the empire in the form of famine, poverty, disease, and internal and external wars. Similarly, if the Amhara elites continue to dream to come back to state power to maintain Ethiopian colonialism and ethnonational hierarchies, they remain part of the problem rather than part of the solution. The second option for Meles Zenawi is to transfer power peacefully and democratically to a majority rule similar to that of South Africa when the Apartheid regime transferred state power to the black majority in order to attain a multinational democracy. Furthermore, the Tigray-Amhara state elites should recognize that their successive regimes have been failures and that they cannot continue to maintain ethnicized Ethiopian state power for very long in a multinational society. If these state elites opt to continue their colonial policies, their empire may violently disintegrate like that of Yugoslavia or may face genocidal destruction like what

⁷⁵Young, Crawford. *The Rising Tide of Cultural Pluralism: The Nation-State at Bay?* (Madison: WI: The University of Wisconsin Press), pp. 27-30.

occurred in Rwanda. This option will have a devastating consequence for "the true Ethiopians" and the colonized population groups.

So, it is essential that all liberation fronts and progressive political forces recognize the possible consequences of the impacts of the policies and actions of authoritarianism and state terrorism and the devastating effects of underdevelopment and war, and commonly seek an enduring political solution through the processes of de-colonization, national self-determination, and multinational democracy. To move towards these political objectives, all progressive individuals, liberation fronts, and other political organizations should reject culturally and ideologically blind old paradigms. These forces should develop a new paradigm shift that allows for the understanding and compromising of contradictory and competing historical and cultural narratives of the past and present of the peoples who have been suffering under the yoke of the Ethiopian authoritarian-terrorist state. The new paradigm should permit the blossoming of democratic and fair practices that can open the door for solution among the colonized and oppressed peoples under the Ethiopian Empire.

WHY AMERICA SHOULD LEAVE SOMALIA TO ITS OWN DEVICES

SAID S. SAMATAR

To Ann and Ioan Lewis: with affection and in gratitude.

The recent dramatic rout of the U.S.-backed Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia's forces in the Somali capital of Mogadishu by militias loyal to the al-Qaeda-linked al-Shabaab group and the latter's ensuing rapid expansion into much of southern Somalia has caught the world by surprise. Thus, the Islamists' sudden rise as a force in the land to be reckoned with has alarmed the U.S. that Somalia might become "a haven for terrorists." Faced with the unwelcome prospect of an Islamic jihadist takeover in Somalia, America has rushed in with munitions and logistics to the tune of \$5 m to bolster the tottering TFG, headed by interim president Sheikh Shariif Sheikh Ahmed ⁹² Admittedly, 5m is peanuts by American standards, but it signals the beginning of a sliding slope--American advisors have a way of following American money for arms, a phenomenon that foreign policy wonks refer to as "Mission Creep" (MC).

The driving force behind the U.N-U.S. obsession to re-create a central government for Somalia is rooted in the West's fear that: 1. stateless--and therefore, in their stated view, lawless--Somalia might become a "Nursery" for "Terror International," especially given the various cells of al-Qaeda-linked jihadists lurking in Somalia, and in the

⁹² Andrew Bast, "It's Time to Leave Somalia." *Newsweek*. August 8, 3, 2009. P. 9.