



Munich Personal RePEc Archive

# **Unfolding the Ongoing Political Dynamics in Ethiopia : Why the Departure of TPLF and Its Doctrine is Important**

Demiessie, Habtamu

Jigjiga University

5 December 2020

Online at <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/104543/>  
MPRA Paper No. 104543, posted 07 Dec 2020 09:38 UTC

# **Unfolding the Ongoing Political Dynamics in Ethiopia**

*Why the Departure of TPLF & Its Doctrine is Important*

**Habtamu Girma Demeissie**

**December 5, 2020**

**Jigjiga, Ethiopia**

## About the Author

Habtamu Girma Demiessie is assistant professor of Economics at Jigjiga University, Ethiopia. An academic and a writer, Mr. Habtamu **authored 5 books and published more than 70 scholarly works**. His academic & literary works, which can be categorized as original research article, commentary, opinion or view point pieces, appeared on well read journals, Newsletters, print media and/or social media outlets in Ethiopia and abroad.

Readers interested to throw comments and critics on his works may contact the author via his addresses below:

### E-mail:

- [ruhe215@gmail.com](mailto:ruhe215@gmail.com)
- [hab200517@yahoo.com](mailto:hab200517@yahoo.com).

### Telephone (Mob):

- +251 (0) 912 064 095.

### Postal Address:

- Jigjiga University, Po box 1020, Jigjiga, Ethiopia

### Website/Blog sites:

- <https://www.jigjigauniversity.academia.edu/HabtamuGirma>
- <https://www.ruhehabtamu.wordpress.com/HabtamuGirma>
- [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Habtamu\\_Demiessie2](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Habtamu_Demiessie2)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) has been maker and breaker in the politics and state governance in Ethiopia since 1991. The last three years, however, marked when TPLF experienced a steep decline in the influence curve. As a reflection of a slump in its influence, TPLF has been aggressively reacting against the central government. In the early days of November 2020, TPLF 'dared' a military setback against the Ethiopian army division in Tigray region, where TPLF holds government power.

In response, the federal government forces, in collaboration with the paramilitary and militia forces of regional states of Amhara and Afar waged massive strike against TPLF's forces. The government of Ethiopia has defined the cause of military intervention in Tigray region to '*enforce law and preserve the sovereignty of the country*'. A one month military operation is getting to its end, and TPLF big-wigs are on a run away.

As a matter of fact, TPLF has been shaping essential constructs that define discourses in Ethiopia's political playfield for the past three decades. The doctrine of TPLF political line is based on the concept of revolutionary democracy. Revolutionary democratic principles were governing the courses of politics in Ethiopia by defining some of the most important subjects of political economy like *interpretation of political history of Ethiopia on Marxian notion of class conflicts; partisan view of rights; dominance of identity politics over citizen politics; the dominance of government in the economic order*, among others.

However, the recent changes unfolding in Ethiopia would end the age old influence of TPLF narratives on essential subjects of political economy. More importantly, the weakening of TPLF influences hopes for a new page by ending the roots of distortions that has been impeding political development in Ethiopia. In this regard, the departure of TPLF hopes for popular causes and Ethiopian values to take firm position in the political and state governances.

This paper reflects on the prospective face of Ethiopian political scenery in the post-TPLF period. By way of illustration, the backdrops of TPLF's political doctrine is defined, discussed and critically evaluated. The paper also examines possible changes in the political, economic and social businesses in Ethiopia accompanied by the departure of TPLF's influences.

## 2. THE FOUNDATIONS OF POLITICAL CONCEPTIONS OF TPLF: REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRATIC LINES

In conceptualizing its political principles, revolutionary democracy connotes the need to have a unique political path that fits the context of Ethiopian society from a host of variables, among others: historical elements that shapes the nature or form of political governance in the past, socio-cultural contexts that defines the Ethiopian societies, the geo-political realities unique to Ethiopia, and the global environment. It also considers time element implicitly this variable shapes the political landscape of the country as it is a force behind the ever changing local and global realities and contexts, which in turn necessitates changing of political goals, strategies, approaches and tactics.

***N.B The Political conception of revolutionary democracy (as presented in italics under subsequent narratives) is referred from a training document disseminated to EPRDF leaderships/cadre in the year 1997 (1985 E.C)***

### 2.1. Interpretation of Ethiopian History

History is one of the key references revolutionary democrats see while justifying their political philosophy, a reference up on which their core political goals, strategies and tactics is defined.

Revolutionary democratic way of historical narratives is all about to explain the following:

- ★ *Was there national oppression (and hence dominant class) in Ethiopia in the past?*
- ★ *Who constitutes dominant class (the ruling class) Vis a Vis the dominated (oppressed) class?*
- ★ *What was the nature and scope of dominance of the ruling class?*

It is better to look revolutionary democratic conceptions on Ethiopian history from two perspectives that construct the approaches in historical narratives. The first one is defining the time of reference appealing its narratives. Time wise, revolutionary democracy puts the history of Ethiopia to 125 years. Second, revolutionary democratic understanding of history is built up on Marxian conception of history, where the tool to making inference which is dialectical materialism is modified to fit the historical path of Ethiopians. Though their historical narrative built upon on the exploiter-exploited dictum, the nature of exploitation has not been over economy or material acquisitions, but over cultural and religious dominance, where the Amhara culture, language and their dominant religion i.e Orthodox Christianity imposed on other nations, nationalities and people of Ethiopia.

#### 2.1.1. ***The Time Frame of Ethiopian History***

Revolutionary democracy narratives on Ethiopian history is limited to the time frame from 1890`'s onwards. Leaving all those political remarks aside, doing so has at least three reasons: One, the time frame remarks the realization of Ethiopian state as we know it today in terms of its territorial integrity, composition and settlement of its people. Two, the narrative helps explain on one of the most controversial political issue in the modern day Ethiopia, that is the issue of Eritrea, which once part of Ethiopia and became independent

with the coming into power of EPRDF on to state power. EPRDF the legitimacy of the secession of Eritrea. Third, doing so is the basis for interpreting Ethiopian history in revolutionary democratic way. Moreover, it asserts it helps validate the revolutionary democratic approach of class based historical narrative. Hence, in explaining and interpreting the Ethiopian history in the context of rule of political economy and socio-cultural relations of people, it starts with the reign of the Menelik II as emperor of Ethiopia. The king is known to establish the border limit of Ethiopia as we know it today. Whether revolutionary democracy disregarded the 3000 years of history of Ethiopia as it is known as *Abyssinian state* remains unclear.

### **2.12. The Class Conception of History**

Revolutionary democrats interpret history of Ethiopia on the power relation between two classes: the *ruling class* and *oppressed mass*. The view of revolutionary democrats about the dominating class was far less clear. There are conceptions that the Amhara as a whole has been regarded as the dominating (ruling) class; there are also evidences telling that the ruling class is limited to the Shoa Amhara elites.

The overall implication of revolutionary democratic historical narratives is that all other nationalities and people of Ethiopia were dominated by the Amhara culture. Moreover, despite diverse religious groups, orthodox Christianity has been favored; other religions didn't get recognition, where their members were unable to practice their religion freely. The ruling class from this ethnic group has been waving a policy of one culture, one language, one religion, one identity and one country policy.

Overall, revolutionary historical narratives sums up that barred nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia were oppressed by the ruling class, the Amhara. The rights to exercise their language, develop their culture, administer their own affairs were largely non-existent. Moreover, the past political governance denies citizens their right to freely practice their religion. Revolutionary democrats' political goals and objectives arises from those historical contexts. Hence, revolutionary democracy is meant to form a government that stands to the respect of the rights of nations, nationalities and people to exercise and develop their own language, culture and identity. It also envisioned a federal political system, where each ethnic group administers their own affairs by themselves.

With regards to past economic dominance in Ethiopia by a single group or class, revolutionary democrats argue that the ruling class has not developed into capitalist class. Hence, there is no historical basis to reallocate neither resources from the ruling class to the mass, nor does worthy to oppress the economic interest of the ruling class.

## **2.2. Sectors of Society**

Not denying such class dictum as exploiter-exploited existed in Ethiopia in the past, revolutionary democracy believes that such a relation has weakened by local forces and ceased to exist long before the time revolutionary democracy principles were formulated. Revolutionary democrats define sections of population into five *sectors*: the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie, the proletariat (urban working class), the national bourgeoisie and non-beneficiaries from revolutionary democracy.

This segmentation is based on the common elements each sector shares, with those characteristics consisting the following, among others: source of income it largely lives on, the nature of organization, its size in terms of number of population it ascribes, the level of political (ideological) consciousness, economic and importance to political and economic goals of revolutionary democracy. As each sector has its unique features, it calls for a need to design a particular strategy (mechanism) in an effort to deal with and mobilize each sector into revolutionary democratic lines.

### **2.2.1. Peasantry**

The one to get first hand privileges were the peasantry. Hence, the need to improve the living standard of this group should be the key economic goal of revolutionary democracy.

*“.....This class is the pillar of revolutionary democracy .Just as the center of the center of our economic developments program is the rural part of the country, so, too, the focus of our political works the peasantry. In order to ensure the support and massive involvement of the peasant class in our revolutionary activities, we should mobilize its members through social, political and economic organizations of its own.”*

### **2.2.2. Proletariat**

The second category in the layer of class stratum defined by revolutionary democracy is the proletariat. The proletariat, which composes the urban wage workers, is considered *“the most reliable supporter of (revolutionary democracy) among the urban population.* This is because *“the realization of our revolutionary democratic goals greatly improves its job opportunities and living standards”* .The seizure of this class is crucial as it composes the largest share of urban sector.

### **2.2.3. The urban petty bourgeoisie**

Next to the proletariat, the privileged class under revolutionary democracy would be *“The urban petty bourgeoisie”*, which include *“the intelligentsia”*. This group is mainly involved in *Small-scale production and petty trade in goods and services* in urban areas. Revolutionary democrats believe they cannot secure the support of this sector for three reasons:

*“.....one reason is the vacillating nature of this sector. The other is that it can be easily and widely infected by narrow nationalism or by chauvinism. (The third reason is) we have not yet created the condition which proves to it that only our approach can fulfill its interests; nor have we done enough political and organizational work in relation to it”*

In this regard, revolutionary democracy defines the urban petty bourgeoisie having two strata: the lower stratum and upper stratum. Whereas the lower stratum is not a threat to end objectives of revolutionary democracy, the upper stratum is not. Revolutionary democracy regards the upper stratum a potential threat to its objectives, for different reasons. To quote from the document:

*“.....The upper stratum is a vacillator and could align itself with enemy forces. Member of this sector do not stand for the rights of people. Though they may advocate multi-party system, they stand for a system which protects the privileges of the ruling classes. They advocate the rights of the individual at the expense of the rights of the people. So they are antagonistic to our political goals.” (Page 23)*

#### **2.2.4. Local Investor (the national bourgeoisie)**

The fifth category, the national bourgeoisie, has two strata: the upper and lower strata. According to the teachings of revolutionary democracy, the upper strata *“has a vacillating nature preventing it from becoming our firm supporter”*, the lower stratum *“could be drawn towards us”*.

#### **2.2.5. Non-beneficiaries**

On the fifth hierarchy of social strata are those who are not beneficiaries of revolutionary democracy, consisting *“.....imperialism and the comprador class”*. This group is identified as a likely instrument of imperialist forces in their moves to serve their interest of imposing on the country *“a dependent economy”*. Moreover, the political interest of the group goes incompatible to revolutionary democracy political goals. Hence, revolutionary democrats considers the group their potential ‘enemy’.

### 3. THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF TIGRAY PEOPLE LIBERATION FRONT (TPLF)

The aforementioned socio-economic realities and political landscape were not ideal to exercise liberal democracy, calling a unique political system that fits the very realities of Ethiopian people.

From socio-economic perspective of the political philosophy rests up on the classic debate on democracy-socio-economic progress linkage, which in this regard we have two contending views: with the first consider the two undetached, and the second prioritizes socio-economic progress a precondition to exercise liberal democracy. Revolutionary democrats subscribe themselves to the second argument, calling the promotion of socioeconomic development a requirement to exercise liberal democracy. Otherwise, it would be like swallowing before chewing, as revolutionary democrats argue.

Moreover, the past political order in Ethiopia was not conducive to implement the popular political right, which it defines the need for inclusive system of political governance where nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia given equally exercise their age long quest for administering their own affairs, freely exercise and develop their language and culture, maintain and build up their identity, and the like.

#### 3.1. Political Goals of TPLF

Revolutionary democracy connotes the need to build a political system that brings about the proper socio-economic and political landscape that requires to realize a liberal democratic order. As it believes that socio-economic development is a priority to freedom, revolutionary democracy works for a political system that would promote socio-economic development of the mass.

As identified in document that depict revolutionary democratic objectives, the major political goals were:-

*“Materializing the people`s political and human rights completely; setting up a government which ensures the all-round participation of the masses; ensuring the people`s right to self-determination and building Ethiopia`s unity based on equality and free choice.”*

According to revolutionary democrats, the unique political quest in Ethiopia was quest for political rights of nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia, the political system has to be designed to address this quest. Hence, there needs to address group rights first, which once addressed, could be possible to exercise liberal democracy. Revolutionary democracy also emphasizes the need for a strong leading party that works for those political goals.

## **3.2. TPLF's Teachings on Major Political Subjects**

### **3.2.1. Political and Human Rights**

Revolutionary democracy begins by referring the scope of rights, saying “.....*From the view point of revolutionary democracy, materializing the rights of the people means materializing the rights of great majority of the population*”. While conceptualizing the issue of human right, revolutionary democracy puts it within the realm of political rights. As established in the part stating its political goal, it depicts “.....*Materializing the people`s political and human rights completely*” as one of its political goals.

The above narrative implies two things: for one, revolutionary democracy understand human right as not having an independent existence. Two, revolutionary democrats have a partisan outlook in defining political and/or human rights. Hence, the suppression of human rights (of the ruling class) might be compromised when doing otherwise would be found obliterating effect against the move of empowering the mass (nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia).

### **3.2.2. Rights of Different Sectors of Society**

The political conceptions of revolutionary democracy, as established in a document stating its political goals, is to empower the mass (i.e nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia) with all aspects of rights: civil, political and economic.

*“... (The Civil rights of the mass includes)respect for the rights of the people includes refraining from imprisoning people without due process, beating people confiscating people`s property, searching people`s houses, restricting their freedom of movement or belief. The democratic rights of the mass include the right to express one`s view, the right to organize at any level and in any form, the right to strike in accordance with the law, the right to express one`s opposition even to the revolutionary democratic government which serves their interest etc..”*

Other segments (sectors) of the society, though not denied exercising their rights, it remains conditional. If and when the rights of the mass is threatened and/or obstructed while other segments of society exercising their rights, the rights of the latter would be suppressed. To give direct quote from revolutionary democratic document:

*“.....Materializing human and democratic rights means protecting the rights of the great oppressed majority. Whether or not the rights of the ruling classes will be protected will be determined by the relevance that this will have to protecting the rights of the masses. If the rights of the ruling classes are going to be respected at the expense of the rights of oppressed masses, then the rights of the oppressors will have to be suppressed and the rights of the oppressed will have to be respected.” (Page 21)*

The conception of revolutionary democracy on rights of people has two implications: one is that it has a partisan outlook; two is that it lays no clear bar that demarcates political rights from human right. In its

efforts to conceptualize and narrate on its goals towards rights, it mixes up political and human rights as one.

### **3.2.3. TPLF`s Political Governance Principles**

According to the teachings of revolutionary democracy, the goals of political governance is to bring nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia together and form a federation on their consent. Hence, the pillar of political governance is defined as:-

*“.....Ensuring the peoples` right to self-determination and building Ethiopia`s unity based on equality and free choice.” (Page 22)*

Revolutionary democrats seem curious on the essence of a widely shared/common outlook and attitudes of people. Hence, they strive to construct a common agenda upon Ethiopians mindsets. In this regard, revolutionary democrat puts language/culture and religion important forces. That is why the underlying philosophy of the political governance is rooted upon promoting the rights of nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia.

#### **3.2.3.1. On National Unity**

Revolutionary democracy argues that what brings people of Ethiopia together emanates from the common interest of staying together.

*“.....Revolutionary democracy firmly believes that people get more benefit from staying together rather than from seceding. But the unity of people can be securely realized when it is based on a voluntary association and equal partnership. The unity that people form voluntarily should also be one which they can opt out of when they wish so. The peoples` right to self-determination, including and up to secession, should be guaranteed.”*

Such conception on national unity sparks one key issue. It seems ignored one key aspect in the relation between Ethiopians, having paramount importance in maintaining the disintegration of the Ethiopian state despite relentless efforts by its enemies. However, worth importance to understand is revolutionary democracy is essentially stood to realize a new Ethiopia, whereby the source of its unity is based on the full consensus of its diverse ethnic groups that makes up the country. As such, the safe way to keep those groups under one flag is by guaranteeing them of any possible move to retrace the past system of political order, which, according to revolutionary democratic line, is one which prevails the suppression of nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia in the name of national unity.

In general, revolutionary democrats are less interested of the power of historical attachment of diverse groups of people in Ethiopia as a force of cohesion key in building the nation, for two reasons: historical mistakes committed by Menelik II, a king widely acclaimed for creating Ethiopia as a country we know it today, in terms of population mix-up and geographic size. In his nation building project, Menelik was used coercion and forceful subjugation, which has left a scar on nations and nationalities of Ethiopia.

More specifically, the nation building project was one which remarked the dominance of one ethnic group- the Amhara, over others, and hence the newly political order to be established should be bold of this historical reality. Such conception is behind the three core elements that feature the revolutionary democratic political system of maintaining the national unity of Ethiopia:

- I. the need to fix the historical mistakes while nation building by Menelik II
- II. The means to mitigate those grievances being by giving official acknowledgment of those historic mistakes
- III. The need to assuring nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia from possible future advent of past form of political order;

### **3.2.3.2. On Federalism**

In the course of arrangements to federal rule, revolutionary democracy attempts to explain for the following: *What should the relationship between the regional governments be? How to frame or structure the power balance of the regional governments and federal government?*

revolutionary democrats say they works to promote the federation of nations, nationalities and peoples` of Ethiopia to govern and decide their affairs independently; also, it calls for a federal government that administer the common interests of the nations, nationalities and people of Ethiopia. In addressing those issues, revolutionary democracy connotes the importance of looking at the interests of anti-revolutionary democrats, in this regard, chauvinists and narrow nationalists. Hence, the nature of relationship, power balance and related other issues of federalism shall be accorded those circumstances. To quote from the document:-

*“.....For Chauvinist forces, unity means the concentration of power at the center. On the other hand, narrow nationalists, too, oppose the peoples` right to self-determination. Though they support the right to secession, they do not stand for a **strong union of the peoples**. They stand for either a powerless central government or the disintegration of the country so that they can rule over their region in the name of their nationality.” (Page.....)*

### **3.3. TPLF`s Principles on Bureaucratic Governance**

Revolutionary democratic line, in its narratives on bureaucratic governance, defines the end objective of bureaucratic governance, as follows:-

*“.....However, since they are there to promote and indirectly implement the goals of revolutionary democracy, they, hence, form part of its strength. The mission of governmental agencies can be defined as protecting the political and human rights of the masses, contributing their share in the implementation of the development strategies, widening the political influence of revolutionary democracy through their activities, acting as its likely instrument to this effect and combating the illegal activities if the enemy”*

### 3.4. TPLF's Conception on the role of Armed Forces

According to revolutionary democratic teachings, the army of countries in Western world, though free from politics, in addition to defending the sovereignty of their respective country, stands to defend the western values. Revolutionary democrats advocate the need to adopt the western way of building armed forces. The army, in addition to safeguarding the sovereignty of Ethiopia, should stand to defend the principles and values of revolutionary democracy. Moreover, the army should be built up on the principle of realizing the fair representation of nations, nationalities and people of Ethiopia.

*“.....under a multi-party system, the defense force cannot continue as the army of the EPRDF-it has to be the army of the state.....but severing its direct links with EPRDF does not mean abandoning its revolutionary democratic character. Various bourgeoisie armies do not have direct organizational ties or commissars, yet to they could shape in any form for any task the bourgeoisie desire them to fulfill. So we need to gain sufficient experience in how to organize our defense force to carry out the required revolutionary democratic tasks through indirect ties just as in the case of the bourgeoisie armies. Thus although it became free and neutral in appearance, the army will be revolutionary democratic in content and protect the constitution and the rights of the masses.”*

Overall, while revolutionary democracy teaches the need to detach the armed forces from the party membership, at the same time it connotes for armed forces adhere themselves to the revolutionary democratic principles and goals. This depiction is ambiguous, and in many ways open room for critics that propagates hesitations against the professionalism and independence of the army from political influence of the ruling EPRDF.

### 3.5. The Pitfalls of TPLF's Political Doctrine

The changed version of Marxian exploiter versus exploited dictum, taking a partisan look, is the approaches that construct chief political narratives, goals and strategies of TPLF's political goals as defined by revolutionary democratic concept. Those conceptions of revolutionary democracy, like which class should be privileged to enjoy political and democratic rights, were all defined upon partisan outlook.

Even human right issue, for which all human kind is entitled to by virtue of being human, do not escape partisanship. According to revolutionary democratic teachings, human right of certain groups/sectors of society would be compromised to defend the political rights of the mass - social sector revolutionary democrats consider their support base.

The partisan outlook in interpreting political economy has a number of political implications. For one, this conception would create mischaracterizations and misunderstanding on the proper political, economic and bureaucratic governance to install. For example, (Segers *et al*, 2008) concludes the following:

*“.....Those who do not adhere and comply with official development policies and guidelines (of revolutionary democratic lines), exactly as in the times of the civil war, are*

*considered as traitors. The discourse about economic development and the fight against poverty become therefore a vector of access or exclusion from the resources controlled by the state”( K. Segers et al 2008)*

Partisanship outlooks are also to blame for distorted and false history to mushroom, which in turn result into mistrust and antagonistic among different groups in the country.

Their political narrative on partisanship lines also likely create conducive environment for hatching more and more ‘foes’ from wider sectors of society within the politics, economy and social business.

More important of all, partisanship would harm the process of national consensus. In general, unless those partisan moves abated, what it takes for national consensus like the task of defining national vision; the required synergy to meet those national agenda; preserving and even consolidating the commonly shared values of Ethiopians; the outshine of a culture of political discourse over shroud politics or hatred politics<sup>2</sup>.

In its worst case, partisan outlook results a distorted political system for political lines largely characterized by one whose prototype for party formation/political opposition is not mere idea differences and/or ideological lines, but mere hatred. Indeed we can easily observe a hatred politics evolving and flourishing if we look into the practical political workings, both from ruling and opposition sides, particularly in the past 25 years, since revolutionary democracy took hold of the political governance in Ethiopia.

---

<sup>1</sup> K. Segers et al., Be like bees. The politics of mobilizing farmers for development in Tigray, Ethiopia, «African Affairs 108/430, 2008, pp. 91-109.

<sup>2</sup> Many political analysts who are near to the modern Ethiopian politics characterize the overall political market and nature of relationship among political parties or groups (in our context between the ruling EPRDF and the major opposition parties) as **Shewa Politics**. The labeling is attributed to the fierce political rivalry, full of hatred that often went deadly among the two political groups appeared with the onset of modern Ethiopian state: the Shewa nobility, who belong central Ethiopia mainly the Shewa Amharas and those elites from Wollo Amhara, part of the north eastern Ethiopia. The political tactics and propaganda of the Shewa elites was powerful enough to depose Lij Eyasu, the legitimate successor of Emperor Menilik II whose origin was from the Wollo elites.

#### 4. THE END OF TPLF RULE HOPES THE RESURRECTION OF ETHIOPIAN VALUES

A one month military operation by Ethiopian Federal Government against Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) forces is getting to its end. On November 28 2020, the Ethiopian security forces controlled Mekelle city, the capital of Tigray regional government, where TPLF controls. The top leadership is on a run away, and it is rumored that they are in hideout in mountainous area on the outskirts of Mekelle city adjacent to Tenben district.

The weakening of TPLF influences in Ethiopia has positive spill-over effects beyond the political sense, having far-reaching importance in remaking the fabrics of Ethiopian society for better. As a matter of fact, TPLF's doctrine has been installed to define not just the course of politics but also redefine the fabrics of the society in a way going against the age old Ethiopian traditions and popular values.

Essentially, Ethiopian values are installed in its rich history of state governance (which counts more than three millennia) and a firm adherence to religion and religious teachings like fear of God, observance to rule & law, patriotism, humility, sense of togetherness and mercy. Those values were crucial factors in preserving the peaceful co-existence of Ethiopians for generations.

Therefore, the departure of TPLF inevitably heralds a newer face of Ethiopia for good. This section of the paper reflects how the end of TPLF influences hopes the resurrection of Ethiopian values.

##### 4.1. '*Politicize Everything*': The Governing Principle of TPLF's Doctrine

One of the changed faces of Ethiopian society in those days since TPLF rule installed to control state politics and governance was how politics is defined, purposed and used. If I may say, politics was abused in all that sense. Politics either misconceived or deliberately purposed to govern human life, even as if it makes for heavenly life. Those values defined and purposed for eternal peace and soul of humanity, like good faith, integrity and benevolence were cheapened to serve mere political needs. The institutions meant to serving those good values were disgraced for political consumption.

The way politics understood by TPLF men and their adherents is analogous to the way economics is understood in an orthodox sense. In orthodox economic thought, there is such a phrase as *homo-economicus*. This term signifies human life as entirely governed by economic motives. And, human being is economic being. The policy implication is that ***economics first and every other departments of life follow***. This materialized conception of life has made humanistic characters like morality, ethics, norms and values for market in exchange of economic interests. The byproduct of such conception might have accelerated economic growth but at the cost of sustainable development, decelerated social harmony and deteriorated wellbeing of not just human being but also all life in the ecological environment, the fauna and flora in general. All sorts of enemies of peace like war, poverty, migration and climate change, are in one way or the other originated from an exaggerated conceptions of the economy and disregard of other aspects of life.

One of legacies of the Tigray People's Liberation Front led government is distorted understandings on the essences of politics and political power. The analogy of material deterministic look of life by orthodox economists, but in its political terms, applies to the contemporary Ethiopian society. As a byproduct of TPLF doctrines, political determinism - which I rather call it ***homo-politicus*** – explains the micro foundation on the meaning, purpose and use of politics as waved by TPLF led government.

The concept of politics was ill understood as synonymous with conspiracy theory. Therefore, every course of political action was directed at devising conspiracies aimed at monopolizing politics by coercing political opposition and the wider populace to stay away from political venture. As a result, the larger mass of Ethiopian populace was made disown politics. The purpose of politics was defined to monopolize all components of public life: political power, economy, bureaucracy, security, diplomacy.

The essence of political power was misconceived a tool to concur the hearts and minds of people by politicizing family & religious institutions. That was how political business undertaken in the time of TPLF rule. In the 27 years of TPLF rule, politics and political businesses have not had a defined territory, well entrenched to govern all aspect of life of the fabrics of Ethiopian society from civilian to army departments of governance; from education to one's career/professions; from familial & friendship relations, even having influences in social values, faith and religious affairs too.

Worse of all, the evils of the political decay in Ethiopia, which is dominated by conspiracy theory, is spreading its dangerous values beyond the political spectrum to possess ordinary people. The nemesis of Ethiopian politics - like mistrust disrespect and character assassinations - are getting imprinted in the minds of people for bad, installed to being a governing principle virtually in all sorts of relationships. As a reflection of that, institutions meant for eternal peace like religion, family and friendships are malfunctioning and endangered for total collapse. As a result, the moral foundations of Ethiopian values like fear of God, humility, observance, altruism and patriotism are getting scarcer, risking the country for social crisis.

All in all, ***politicization of everything***' policy of TPLF is to blame for eroding the moral height of Ethiopian society. By far, that explains the woes of Ethiopians across the board in the past couple of years – like mass killings, communal conflicts, and mass displacement of citizens from their livelihoods, among others.

Therefore, the departure of TPLF and its policies would have a far-reaching consequences going beyond the realm of political space, heralding the resurrection of Ethiopian values.

#### **4.2. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's Leadership Philosophy is a turnaround against TPLF's 'Politicizing Everything' Principle**

In his inaugural speech in April 2018, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) vowed to fight back the wrong conception about the essence, purpose and use of politics and political power prevailing in Ethiopia. The Nobel winning Prime Minister cleverly acknowledged the fact that exaggerated political business is getting itself an enemy of Ethiopian society, damaging the age old tradition of its people to live in harmony. The last three years of Abiy's rule is a testimony of his firm actions in correcting the messes from some of the bad legacies of TPLF era which has sparked against the good values that has preserved the existence of Ethiopian society for more than three millennia.

Some of the direct actions of Abiy's rule in the past couple of years were meant to restoring the role of religion and religious people on social businesses. In this regard, interventions were made to mend the consequences of divisive policies of TPLF, which has created competing religious leadership in both major religions of the country, the Orthodox Church and Islam. His direct involvement was witnessed in efforts to reconciling the divided synods come together and dissolve their disputes and work as one for the flourish of the teachings of the church.

I hope the post-TPLF Ethiopia will further scale up efforts embarked by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to preserving the fabrics of society through protecting institutions that nurture it. This important assignment shall be taken by all Ethiopians.

#### **4.3. The Departure of TPLF heralds De-politicization of Ethiopian History**

The TPLF narratives on history principally relied on Marxian conception of history, which bases itself on antagonisms between sections of society. TPLF people and their adherents try to assert the history of Ethiopia bounded to a time frame of 130 years. Such distorted understanding on Ethiopian history was meant to justify the ill-fated course of political goals and objectives of TPLF, which is 'identity politics' based on historical discontents of Nations, Nationalities and People of Ethiopia.

However, this conception goes in total contradiction of the rich account of governance history of Ethiopia, which counts back three millennia. A fair fetch from world history entails that Ethiopia is home to one of the ancient civilizations, the Axumite civilization. Moreover, TPLF's historical narrative don't acknowledge the age old tradition of mutual co-existence of its people despite all forms of diversities (be it religion, language and culture).

TPLF's note about Ethiopian history is one which disregarded the rank and status of the country in the world history. History records Ethiopia as land of inspirations for freedom, dignity and emancipation of human kind in general and the black people in particular. Ethiopia's glorious past also goes to global diplomacy. That has been apparent in the days of Emperor Haileselassie I (who ruled from 1923-1974), when Ethiopia was one handful of influential nations laid the foundation for global cooperation. Worth

mentioning in this regard is the role of Ethiopia in the establishments of global & continental organizations like The League of Nations, The United Nations and Organization of African Unity (OAU) global context.

For TPLF men though this rank of the country in the world stage is not a regard. As TPLF's diplomatic lines failed to embrace those essential historical values, that in part explains for a deteriorating influence of Ethiopia in global arena in the past three decades.

With the end of TPLF dominated federal government back in April 2018, however, there appeared good hopes for the reemergence of Ethiopia in its right place in global & continental affairs. Abiy Ahmed (PhD), the young and energetic new leader of Ethiopia, came up with newer approaches as distinct from TPLF's. Dr. Abiy Ahmed is relieving of the distorted conception of Ethiopian history as a result of TPLF's political doctrine. The outcome of such good move is reaping in recent days, when Ethiopian affairs (be it in good or bad) are grabbing the attention of global discourses and international media.

Essentially, one of the sources of strength of Abiy Ahmed's government in diplomatic front emanates from acknowledging the right place the country deserves in the world stage, In all fronts the leader confronted against TPLF forces, diplomatic missions were vital. In this regard, almost all countries were showing alliances to Abiy Ahmed's government.

Generally speaking, the new policy of Abiy Ahmed's government - where de-politicization of history is implicit in its governances - explain success of the federal government against TPLF and its toxic doctrine.

And, It is my hope that Abiy keep on depoliticizing history not just for the grace of Ethiopia & its people, but also for his own sake, to sustain the achievements of his government.

#### **4.4. The Departure of TPLF Heralds for Ethiopian Values to Define the Course of Politics**

Powered by TPLF's political teachings, the dominance of identity politics over citizen politics has remained an apparent reality of Ethiopian politics in the past three decades or so. It is unfortunate that the basis for political agenda waved by political elites have been justified (in its entirety) by the creation of historical discontents and antagonism among sections of societies. Political causes did not consider the remarkable history of Ethiopians across diversities to have enjoyed harmonious co-existence for millennia.

Indeed, the political doctrine of TPLF was a direct antithesis of Ethiopian values. One can see no element of Ethiopian values to have role in shaping the course of political businesses and the behavior of politicians. The distinguishing features of Ethiopian political system rather principled on conspiracy theory where political personality of the elite groups made up of evil characters like animosity, hostility and grievance.

In the past, Ethiopian values had little accord in defining the course of politics. However, the end of TPLF's grip of power would herald the opening of new pages in the modern political history of Ethiopia. More importantly, the recent dynamics in Ethiopia hopes the culmination of ill-fated & divisive political causes and bring about Ethiopian values, logic and principles to govern political discourses.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### i. Articles

Annalisa Prizzon and Andrew Rogerson, 2013. *The Age of Choice: Ethiopia in the New Aid Landscape*, Overseas Development Institute, London

Beres A. Jebena. 2015. Ethnic Federalism and Democratic Developmental State in Ethiopia: Some Points of Contradiction, *International Journal of Political Science and Development*, Vol. 3(7),

Demiessie, Habtamu G. 2017. Ethiopia at Cross Road? A Brief Look into the Revolutionary Democratic Rule (1991-Present), Volume 7, Number 2, pp 13-38

Emanuele Fantini 2013. *Developmental state, economic transformation and social diversification in Ethiopia*, ISPI, No. 163.

International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2011. *The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia: joint staff advisory note on the Growth and Transformation Plan 2010/11 – 2014/15*, Washington, D.C. Report no.11/303- ET

Habtamu Alebachew, 2012. *Setting the Accounts of Revolutionary Democracy in Ethiopia after Meles*.

K. Segers et al., *Be like bees*, 2008. The politics of mobilizing farmers for development in Tigray, Ethiopia, «*African Affairs* 108/430, pp. 91-109.

LEFORT, R, 2012. Free market economy, Developmental state ad party-state hegemony in Ethiopia: the case of the “model farmers”, «*Journal of Modern African Studies*», vol. 50, no. 4, , pp. 681-706.

Tesfahannes Beyene, 2013. ‘Meles Zenawih has Passed away --Was He a Credible Leader When it Comes to the Relationship between Eritrea and Ethiopia?’, London.

Habtamu Alebachew, *Setting the Accounts of Revolutionary Democracy in Ethiopia after Meles*,

### ii. Books

Demiessie, Habtamu G., 2017. *The Cruces of Post-1991 Ethiopian Politics: Revolutionary Democracy, Democratic Developmentalism and the late Meles Zenawi*, LightningSource Publishers, U.S.A

Gebru Asrat, 2015. ‘*ሉዓላዊነትና ዲሞክራሲ በኢትዮጵያ*’, Addis Ababa, Page 148

Merera Gudina (Ph.D), 2016. «*የኢትዮጵያ የታሪክ ፈተናዎች እና የሚጋጩ ህልሞች: የኢህአዴግ ቆርጦ ቀጥል ፖለቲካ*», (page 73-75)

### **iii. Print Media Sources**

Nolawi Melakedingel, May 10 2013, Addis Standard Magazine,

*Addis Admass, Amharic weekly Newspaper (Megabit 12, 2005 or March 2013 issue)*

*Addis Raey Magazine, Megabit-Miazia 2008 E.C (March-April, 2016), 11<sup>th</sup> Year, Vol. 5, No. 4, Page 26.*

### **iv. Website Sources**

www.AddisAbabaOnline, Interview with Gebru Asrat, March 11, 2005, *Extracted on March 2017*

*http://www.strathink.net, Donald Yamamoto, "Understanding Meles Zenawi: Conversations with U.S. Diplomats (Part 2)". , Extracted on April 2016.*