

The de-Ethiopianization of Ethiopia

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For over four decades, the self-styled Tigrean People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which clings to power by force in Ethiopia today, has been planning and waging a sustained and relentless political, social and cultural war to “de-Ethiopianize” Ethiopia. The TPLF's de-Ethiopianization program and ideology are built around a set of specific strategies, policies, actions and practices intended to 1) strip Ethiopians of any meaningful consciousness of their national identity and expurgate from their collective social experience any sense of commonly shared values, beliefs and customs, and 2) Balkanize, merchandize and dismember the country employing a variety of tactics and schemes. The TPLF's “de-Ethiopianization” ideology and programs were diabolically conceived, meticulously planned and systematically executed with the ultimate aim of obliterating the historical Ethiopia and replacing it with an “Ethiopia” fabricated from the warped figment of the TPLF's imagination. The TPLF has officially and openly implemented its de-Ethiopianization program since it seized power in 1991.

The TPLF's ideology of de-Ethiopianization

What exactly is the TPLF's ideology of “de-Ethiopianization of Ethiopia”?

The answer to that question comes with crystal clarity from Gebremedhin Araya, the former treasurer and top leader of the TPLF, who left that organization and distinguished himself as a fearless and uncompromising patriotic Ethiopian truth-teller. In an extraordinary video interview posted on Youtube (with my English translation of the Amharic words below), [Gebremedhin explained the TPLF's four ideological pillars of de-Ethiopianizing Ethiopia by systematically cleansing Ethiopian national identity, history and consciousness:](#)

- 1) Eritrea is an Ethiopian colony. Eritrea is a developed country. Eritrea existed before Ethiopia. Ethiopia is a country created by (Emperor) Menelik. The name Ethiopia is not known. Ethiopia has no history, nothing.
- 2) Tigray is an independent sovereign country which was invaded by (Emperor) Atse Menelik and became an Amhara colony. Tigray is a colonial territory of Amhara. That is what is

stated in the woyane (TPLF) Manifesto which is the policy guideline (exhibiting the Manifesto in the video). [To read the [original handwritten 'TPLF Manifesto' in pdf format](#), [click here](#); for the [online version click here](#)] Therefore, we must liberate Tigray from Amhara colonialism and create a Tigray republic.

- 3) Amhara are the enemy of the Tigray people. Amhara are not only enemies but also double enemies. Therefore, we must crush Amhara. We have to destroy them. Unless Amhara are destroyed, beaten down, cleansed from the land, Tigray cannot live in freedom. For the government we intend to create, Amhara will be the main obstacle.
- 4) Since Ethiopia is a country created by Menelik, created by Menelik's invasion and since there are many nations and nationalities invaded by Menelik, these groups (hold and exhibits Manifesto in the video) must gain their freedom from what is now called Ethiopia and establish their own country. The country known as Ethiopia is new and not even 100 years old. This country must be destroyed, zeroes out. Nations and nationalities and we must create our own governments. Eritrea gets her independence; that is the basis of our struggle.

It is important to note that neither the TPLF as an organization nor its leaders in power, marginalized from power or retired from power have ever jointly or severally disavowed the authenticity of the document known as the "TPLF Manifesto" nor repudiated any of its contents. The "Manifesto" remains to this day the guidepost and ideological underpinning of the TPLF.

The "mechanics" of de-Ethiopianizing Ethiopia

The TPLF's decades-long "de-Ethiopianization" effort has been waged on multifaceted strategic fronts using multipronged approaches. The strategy is pretty sophisticated and combines political warfare with cultural, social and psychological warfare. In this commentary, I will touch upon only three of those strategies (and will address other related strategies in future commentaries): 1) trivialization of Ethiopian history and demonization of historical Ethiopian leaders, 2) demonization of "Amhara" and "Amhara" people, and 3) Balkanization, dismemberment and merchandizing of Ethiopia and decomposition of Ethiopian territorial integrity and sovereignty.

I. Trivialization of Ethiopian history and demonization of historical Ethiopian leaders

The first weapon in the TPLF's arsenal of de-Ethiopianization of Ethiopia is the flagrant denial of the existence of a historical Ethiopia and denigration and disparagement of its past imperial leaders. For the TPLF, Ethiopia is a recent political invention, barely a century old. According to the TPLF mythos, Ethiopia is a geopolitical entity cobbled together by Atse (Emperor) Menelik towards the end of the Nineteenth Century. The TPLF narrative depicts Menelik as a ruthless warmonger hell-bent on creating an "Amhara" empire; he purportedly slashed and burned everything in his path to conquer and

subjugate neighboring “nations and nationalities”. For the TPLF and its late godfather Meles Zenawi, the Ethiopia known as the land of the “Habasha people” (or the “Abyssinian people”) for millennia has little to do with the contemporary inhabitants of the land known as Ethiopia or the juridical land mass known as Ethiopia.

Such ignorant historical revisionism and benighted historical deconstruction by the TPLF is blind to the manifestly self-evident historical facts. According to the TPLF mythos, the dozens of references in the Old Testament and at least one in the New Testament to Ethiopia and Ethiopians have nothing to do with the contemporary inhabitants or land of Ethiopia. In Genesis (2:13) is written, “And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.” In Numbers (12:1) is written, “And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.” In Psalms (68:31) is written, “Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.” According to the TPLF all of the references to Ethiopia in the Old Testament are about some other fictional Ethiopia. None of the Biblical references have any relevance or reference to the present land known as Ethiopia or the ancestors of the people who presently inhabit the land known as Ethiopia.

Similarly, for the TPLF modern Ethiopia has nothing to do with the ancient Axumite Empire (3rd-6th Century A.D.). Axum is a place of extraordinary importance in Ethiopia and Ethiopian history. There is no doubt that Axum is the political foundation of present day Ethiopia. Axum is considered by many Ethiopians and non-Ethiopians alike to be the capital city of the legendary Queen Sheba. King Ezana of Axum made Christianity a state religion in the 4th Century. Tens of millions of present-day Ethiopian Christians throughout the country believe Axum is the “Second Jerusalem”; it is their holiest place because they believe the Ark of the Covenant is housed at the cathedral of Tsion Maryam (Mary of Zion). According to the TPLF mythos, all of this is also pure fiction. It has nothing to do with present day Ethiopia and Ethiopians.

It was an Axumite king who gave protection and assistance to the first Muslims (First Hijra) who were sent to Axum as early as 615 A.D. by the Prophet Mohammed to find refuge from persecution. The Prophet recorded that event and showed his appreciation to the Axumite king and the Habasha people in the Hadith (the teachings, deeds and sayings of the Prophet Mohammed) when he said, “Leave the Habasha alone, so long as they do not take the offensive!” According to the TPLF all of this is pure fiction. The “Habasha” the Prophet spoke of have nothing to do with present day Ethiopia and Ethiopians.

Edward Gibbon, the Eighteenth Century English historian, in his monumental historical work, “The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire”, wrote, “Encompassed on all sides by the enemies of their religion the Æthiopians slept near a thousand years, forgetful of the world, by whom they were

forgotten”. According to the TPLF, Gibbon was writing “fairy tales” when he wrote that because as the late Meles Zenawi argued in 1993, “Ethiopia is only 100 years old. Those who claim otherwise are indulging themselves in fairy tales.”

The victory of Ethiopia over the Kingdom of Italy in 1896 at the Battle of Adwa was an epochal event in recorded African history. The Battle of Adwa marks the first time an African army decisively defeated a European power and expelled it from its territory. What is even most astounding is the fact that the Ethiopians defeated the mighty Italian army only two years after the Berlin Conference where European powers agreed to carve up Africa and completely gobbled up the continent in less than a decade. Ethiopia was able to retain its long-held sovereignty and successfully resist all European colonization attempts. According to the TPLF mythos, all of this is pure fiction. The victory over the colonial power has nothing to do with present day Ethiopia or Ethiopians. The victory of the Battle of Adwa belongs only to Tigreans.

The second prong of the TPLF’s trivialization and demonization campaign has been focused on a campaign of fear and smear against past Ethiopian imperial leaders. Atse (Emperor) Menelik II, the Nineteenth Century Ethiopian emperor who defeated the Italians at the Battle of Adwa (and whose centennial is being celebrated this year (Ethiopian calendar)), is a special target of TPLF vilification. Atse Menelik is depicted by the TPLF as a genocidal maniac and mass murderer. As I argued in my January 2014, commentary “[Demonizing Ethiopian History](#)”, the TPLF has undertaken a massive propaganda campaign in an attempt to caricature, demean and demonize the great Ethiopian king. Over one hundred years after Menelik’s his death, the TPLF has tried to resurrect him as the devil incarnate. Barely two years after Meles Zenawi’s death, the TPLF is waging a campaign to resurrect Meles as the savior of Ethiopia. The TPLF wants to rewrite history by depicting Menelik as an enemy of the Oromo people. The fact of the matter is that there is more than sufficient evidence to prosecute Meles, if he were alive, and members of his gang for the untold and unspeakable crimes against humanity they committed against the Oromo people.

The late Meles Zenawi made every effort to deny the monumental contributions of Atse (H.I.M) Haile Selassie to the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the predecessor to the African Union. Meles fought tooth and nail to make sure H.I.M. Haile Selassie’s statute was not erected on the African Union grounds because he was not as “pan-Africanist” as Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana’s first president! The historical facts tell a much different story. Nkrumah himself repeatedly said there would have been no Organization of African Unity but for the relentless efforts of H.I.M. Haile Selassie. It was H.I.M Haile Selassie who was elected “Father of African Unity” by his peers at the 1972 Ninth Heads of States and Governments meeting of the Organization of African Unity. H.I.M Haile Selassie was elected the first chairman of the OAU in 1963 and elected again in 1966 to serve in the same position, making him the only African leader to have held that position twice.

After Meles’ passing, [one news source reported an interview](#) in which the former Ethiopian “president”, Girma Woldegiorgis, sent a letter to the current “prime minister” Hailemariam Desalegn stating, “A

statue must be erected to commemorate the Emperor...he was the first leader of Africa and I think he deserves a statue." Little action on this issue could be expected from a Meles wannabe!

Obviously, the trivialization of Ethiopian history and demonization of its historical leaders is intended to achieve one thing, unwind the historical clock to Year 1: The beginning of Ethiopian history with Meles Zenawi as the "parens patriae" literally (father of the nation) and the TPLF as midwives to the birth of a nation. The ludicrous distortion of the historical record by the TPLF and its leaders is a futile attempt to re-write, miswrite, overwrite and un-write Ethiopian history with the hagiography (tale of sainthood) of Meles Zenawi. They want to unwrite Menelik's history and write up Meles' history as the greatest African leader of modern times. They want to demonize Menelik and mythologize Meles as the "new breed of African leader", the "bringer of developmental state democracy", the "African leader on Global Warming and Climate change", the "destroyer of Somali jihadists and terrorists" and so on.

II. Demonization of "Amhara" and "Amhara" people

The TPLFs anti-"Amhara" ideology and "Amhara" demonization campaign is totally incomprehensible and irrational. The TPLF Manifesto declares "Amhara" are the enemies of Tigreans. As Gebremedhin, the former TPLF treasurer explained, the cornerstone of TPLF ideology is that "Amhara are the enemy of the Tigray people. Amhara are not only enemies but also double enemies. Therefore, we must crush Amhara. We have to destroy them. Unless Amhara are destroyed, beaten down, cleansed from the land, Tigray cannot live in freedom. For the government we intend to create, Amhara will be the main obstacle." Once in power the late Meles and his TPLF fully implemented their hateful ideology against "Amhara" and "Amhara people" and did everything to crush them. But...

Who are the "Amhara" and "Amhara people" the TPLF has declared an enemy worthy of genocidal acts?

In as much as the TPLF has propagandized and depicted the "Amhara people" to be demonic monsters, the fact of the matter is that the "Amhara people" are actually the POOREST PEOPLE IN THE ENTIRE WORLD. That was the conclusion [Al Jazeera reached in its recent report](#): "Amhara is one of the poorest region not only in Ethiopia but in Africa."

Persecution and destruction of "Amhara people" has been and continues to be the driving ideology and force of the TPLF. The late Meles had such deep-rooted hatred for "Amhara people" that it could be said without exaggeration that anti-"Amharism" defined his entire cosmology. Meles' raison d'être was hatred of Amhara! There is no rhyme or reason for the TPLF's and its leaders' antipathy towards "Amhara people". One is left wondering, forced to examine world history to try and fathom the TPLF's and its leaders' deep and inexorable hatred of the "Amhara" and "Amhara people".

One may find compelling parallels between Meles' and the TPLF's irrational and demented hatred of "Amharas" and Hitler's and the Nazi's irrational and demented hatred of Jews. Hitler blamed the Jews

for all of the ills of German society. Meles blamed all of the ills of Ethiopian society, past and present, on “Amharas.”

Hitler and the Nazis believed in racial division of people; they also believed there will always be an ongoing struggle between these different races. They believed the “Aryan race” was the best and strongest race destined to rule. Jews and other non-Aryans were of the inferior race (“Untermensch” or subhuman creatures).

For Meles and the TPLF, “Tigreans” are the best and strongest ethnic group since they as a guerilla force defeated and routed a mighty army with tanks, planes and artillery. They are convinced that their military conquest and seizure of power grants them a birthright to rule perpetually. The TPLF and its leaders consider themselves to be the ethnic equivalent of the “Aryan race”. The rest including “Amharas” are “subethnic kreatur” (subethnic creatures). Thus, the political leadership, the bureaucracy, the police, security and military institutions in Ethiopia today are totally and completely dominated by the TPLF. The TPLF regime and its supporters today have total and complete control of all economic sectors in Ethiopia including banking, construction and cement production, mining, transportation, insurance and the import-export sectors.

The late Meles believed that Ethiopians could be divided strictly by their ethnic identity, linguistic and cultural characteristics that there is ongoing competition between the ethnic groups. Meles invented his own bogus “federalism” and implemented it in a system called “kilils” (homelands). In Article 39 of the “Constitution of Ethiopia”, Meles wrote, “A nation, nationality or people for the purpose of this Constitution, is a group of people who have or share a large measure of a common culture, or similar customs, mutual intelligibility of language, belief in a common or related identities, and who predominantly inhabit an identifiable, contiguous territory.”

The Nazis practiced mass deportation and forced removal of Jews and other “Untermensch” from their homes in Nazi-occupied countries. As I documented in my April 2012 commentary, “[Green Justice or Ethnic Injustice](#)”, the late Meles Zenawi personally ordered the removal and deportation of tens of thousands of “Amhara” from Southern Ethiopia. In justifying his actions, Meles called the North Gojam “Amhara” “sefaris” (criminals squatters or marauding land grabbers):

... By coincidence of history, over the past ten years numerous people -- some 30,000 sefaris (squatters) from North Gojam -- have settled in Benji Maji (BM) zone [in Southern Ethiopia]. In Gura Ferda, there are some 24,000 sefaris. Because the area is forested, not too many people live there. For all intents and purposes, Gura Ferda is little North Gojam complete with squatters’ local administration... Settlers cannot move into the area and destroy the forest for settlement. It is illegal and must stop... Those who allege persecution and displacement of Amharas are engaged in irresponsible agitation which is not useful to anyone...”

Former Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Herman Cohen, who mediated the transfer of power to the TPLF from the military junta in 1991 in an interview in January 2012 revealed: “And I questioned him [Meles] about land ownership. I was promoting allowing the farmers to have ownership of the land. He said that was not good because the Amharas would come and take over and buy all the land; and these people [the farmers] would return to be serfs like they were under the Emperor.”

The Nazis demonized the Jews by calling them loathsome names and used derogatory epithets against them. The TPLF demonizes “Amhara” by using loathsome stereotypes to inflame underlying ethnic hatreds and tensions. The “Amhara” are not just the “enemy”, they are the “double enemy”.

The “Amhara” are “colonizers”, “arrogant oppressors”, “criminal squatters”, “conquerors”, “neftegna” (gun-toting, land grabbing settlers), “enslavers”, etc. The incessant “Amhara” demonization propaganda is created not only to dehumanize the “Amhara” but also to make the “Amhara” the target of persecution, mistreatment, abuse, ridicule and official neglect and indifference.

Just as it is difficult to establish Hitler’s hatred of the Jews to a specific event in his life growing up in Vienna, it is similarly difficult to explain Meles’ hatred of “Amharas” having grown up in Addis Ababa, the capital. Meles attended one of the more exclusive high schools there and even had the prized opportunity to attend university.

III. Balkanization, dismemberment and merchandizing of Ethiopia and decomposition of Ethiopian territorial integrity and sovereignty

The late Meles and his TPLF today have gone to extraordinary lengths to Balkanize and merchandize Ethiopia and bargain away its sovereignty. In February 2014, I wrote a commentary entitled, “[Saving Ethiopia From the Chopping Block](#)” challenging the legal basis for Hailemariam Desalegn’s (puppet-mastered by the TPLF) to transfer sovereign Ethiopian territory to the Sudan. That commentary was a follow up on my 2008 commentary entitled, “[All is Not Quiet on the Western Front](#)” challenging the late Meles Zenawi’s secret land giveaway to the Sudan.

In “Saving Ethiopia”, I argued that “Meles had no legal authority to hand over Ethiopian land to the Sudan, or for that matter to anyone else. Today, Hailemariam also has no legal right or authority to turn over Ethiopian land to the Sudan. Having said that, there is no question that Meles has ‘signed’ an ‘agreement’ to relinquish a “large chunk of territory in the Amhara region” to the Sudan. Hailemariam and his puppet masters are now trying to make us swallow this illegal land transfer by sweet talk of a ‘strategic framework agreement’. The fact of the matter is that any transfer of Ethiopian land to the Sudan or any other country by the regime in power today is without any legal basis under the Ethiopian Constitution or international law.”

In March 2011, I wrote a commentary entitled, “[Ethiopia: A Country for Sale](#)” lamenting the fact that the country is being sold piecemeal to fly-by-night scammers disguised as “investors”: “Ethiopia is on sale. Everybody is getting a piece of her. For next to nothing. The land vultures have been swooping down on Gambella from all parts of the world. Meles Zenawi proudly claims ‘36 countries including India, China, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have leased farm land.’ This month (March 2011) the concessions are being worked at a breakneck pace, with giant tractors and heavy machinery clearing trees, draining swamps and ploughing the land... Karuturi, ‘one of the world’s top 25 agri-businesses’ plans to ‘export palm oil, sugar, rice and other foods from Gambella province to world markets’.”

In my March 2013 commentary, “[Land and Ethiopia’s Corruptocracy](#)”, using the World Bank’s 550-page study “Diagnosing Corruption in Ethiopia”, I demonstrated that corruption in the land sector in Ethiopia occurs in several ways. First and foremost, “elite and senior officials” snatch the most desirable lands in the country for themselves. These fat cats manipulate the “weak policy and legal framework and poor

systems to implement existing policies and laws” to their advantage. They engage in “fraudulent actions to allocate land to themselves in both urban and rural areas and to housing associations and developers in urban areas.” These “influential and well-connected individuals are able to have land allocated to them often in violation of existing laws and regulations.

For nearly a quarter of a century, the late Meles and the TPLF have been repackaging an atavistic style of tribal politics in a fancy wrapper called “ethnic federalism.” The TPLF has managed to segregate the Ethiopian people by ethno-tribal classifications and corralled them like cattle into grotesque regional political units called “kilils” (literally means “reservation”, ethnic homelands; semantically, the word also suggests the notion of an exclusion zone, an enclave).

The ideology of “kililism” shares many of the attributes of apartheid’s “Bantustanism” (“black African tribal homelands”). In Article 39 of the “Constitution of Ethiopia” Meles created “ethnic homelands” just as apartheid South Africa’s Bantu (Black) Authorities Act of 1951 created “bantustans”. Article 39 provides, “A nation, nationality or people for the purpose of this Constitution, is a group of people who have or share a large measure of a common culture, or similar customs, mutual intelligibility of language, belief in a common or related identities, and who predominantly inhabit an identifiable, contiguous territory.” Both ideologies aim to concentrate members of designated ethnic groups into “homelands” by creating ethno-linguistically homogeneous territories which could ultimately morph into “autonomous” nation states.

Prof. Ted Vestal, in his article, “Human Rights Abuses in ‘Democratic’ Ethiopia: Government Sponsored Ethnic Hatred”, illuminates the underlying logic of the TPLF’s “kililism” strategy: “Another aspect of the EPRDF’s [the organizational shell used by the TPLF to project an image of pluralism] strategy is to establish a governing system of ethnic federalism emphasizing rights of ‘nations, nationalities, and peoples.’ This high-sounding principle, cribbed from Lenin, is more Machiavellian than Wilsonian however. If the outnumbered Tigrayans who direct the EPRDF/FDRE can keep other ethnic groups divided and roiled against each other in ethno-xenophobias or content to manage affairs in their own limited bailiwicks, then larger matters can be subsumed by the one governing party. Thus, what the EPRDF views as the false ideology of nationalism for a ‘Greater Ethiopia’ can be kept in check and its proponents divided and conquered.”

The late Meles and the TPLF have bargained away a sea outlet and landlocked Ethiopia. Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Herman Jay Cohen are on record stating that they warned and urged Meles to retain an outlet to the sea for Ethiopia by keeping the port of Assab; but their exhortations fell on Meles’ deaf ears.

In 2000, after a two-year war with Eritrea and the deaths of some 80 thousands Ethiopian soldiers, the late Meles signed the Algiers Agreement formally ending the Ethiopian-Eritrean War. That Agreement established a boundary and claims commissions to resolve outstanding issues. What is incredible and inexcusable about that Agreement is the fact that after the Eritreans invaded Badme in northern Ethiopia in 1998 and were decisively defeated, Meles promptly converted Ethiopia’s battlefield victory into total diplomatic defeat by agreeing to deliver Badme to the invaders in arbitration. This marks the first time in modern world history where a nation that successfully repelled an invasion of its territory at

great cost of human lives promptly turned around and delivered that same territory to the enemy on a silver platter in binding international arbitration.