

Comment on Melbaa Gada, Author of “Oromia, an Introduction to the History of the Oromoo People”. (by Tefera Dinberu)

This comment is in regards to Melbaa Gadaa’s book on Oromia that was published in Minnesota in 1988 on the history of the Oromoo people. The objective of my comment is to help Melbaa and other thinkers like him see history with all its vices and virtues and intellectually project the destiny of Oromoo people in the future in relation to the rest of Ethiopians and what we can contribute for justice to prevail for the well-being of all peoples in that part of Africa.

The book is his second edition. The author has gathered information from many different sources – oral, his own experience or observation, professional/historical sources, and non-history sources. Melbaa relied more on some foreign sources and seems to have refrained from referring to domestic sources that he must have been familiar with. Any ways, I will try to dwell on the general scheme of his book as a whole by specifying some major points entertained in the book as follows:-

Regarding the source of Oromoo people, Huntingford says, “It is clear that the first African homeland of the Galla was what is now British Somaliland and northwestern Somalia, to which their own traditions bring them ... It was the Somali settlement that drove the Galla to the west and south west” (Huntingford 19). Melbaa used this book as a reference; however, he did not mention this point. He holds that Ethiopian governments used to believe that Oromoo people were foreigners who migrated to this country. And he also says, “... Oromoo have a long history of presence as a community of people, in this part of Africa” (Gadaa 11-13). He cites Wainwright and Greenfield archaeological traces (phallic stone remains),

Decorations of stone bowls from Zimbabwe include pictures of cattle with long “lyre-shaped “horns such as raised by Oromoo. According to these scholars, this and the phallic stones found in Zimbabwe are traced directly to Oromoo land linked to their early settlements there and the Zimbabwe civilization. (Gadaa 22)

It is not clear if Melbaa is justifying that Oromoo came from another part of Africa and whether or not that agrees with his other statement that Oromoo was colonized by “Abyssinia”? Ethiopian history writers did not say that Oromoo people came from a foreign country. The only puzzle was how they could migrate or raid and occupy a very large area of the country in a relatively short period of time (16th to the early 19th centuries). I have enumerated my answer to this question down below; however, Melbaa probably rather unintentionally told us that the Oromoo people had their early settlements in Zimbabwe and lived in Ethiopia “as a community of people”.

There are many things that tell that an influx of Oromoo immigration took place in the 16th century and afterwards to the heartland of Ethiopia: although they might have in-out migration earlier, this great immigration followed the footsteps of the rise of Ahmed Ibn Ibrahim al Ghazi or Gragn (1527-1543), which took advantage of the weakness of Ethiopian Christian rulers and assistance from Turkey/Ottoman Empire/ that had controlled the Red sea area at the height of its

hegemony (16th & 17th centuries). To resist the Jihadist movement, Emperor Libne Dingel had requested assistance from Portugal; however, the assistance did not arrive on time. So, E. Libne Dengil could not stand Gragn's forces and lost the biggest battle with Gragn in 1529 at Shimbra Kure near Waj (around Nazreth) and fled to Lasta and Begemdir where he eventually died from illness. Gragn's invasion contributed to new demographics and dynamics of the social relationships of our peoples. Before the Portuguese force arrived, Christians were mercilessly persecuted; many fled their native places to the north to escape from the religious persecution. The survivors then settled around mountainous and un-navigable rigorous terrains. The Christian population that used to inhabit Shewa, Arsi, Bale, eastern Ethiopia like Dawaro (parts of Bale and Harar at that time), Sidamo, Ganz, kafa, Conta, Damot, Angot, Wallo¹, Sidama, Hadiya, what is now Gamu Gofa, etc., migrated to the most rigid and segregated mountainous localities such as northern Shewa, parts of Wallo, Begemedir, Tigray, and Gojjam while very few remained in the segregated mountainous locations still isolated from their larger groups. The mostly women and children who remained behind faced forceful conversion to Islam.

Oromoo tribes got this opportune condition of power vacuum and penetrated the central and even northern part of the country and made settlements with little or no hindrance. Herbert S. Lewis wrote it as follows:

We do not know why the *Galla* suddenly became mobile and aggressive, but we do know from several early written sources that by 1540 the *Galla* had begun to attack the state of Bali. Defeating Bali, they rapidly moved on to Dawaro, Fatajar, Ifat, and Adal. Turning west, they cut off the southwestern tributaries from contact with the Abyssinians and occupied the central western region of Wellega. "...they made themselves Masters of the Provinces of Gedman, Angota, Dawaro, Wed, Fat'egar, Ifat, Guragea, Ganza, Conta, Damota, Waleka, Bizama, part of Shewa, and many intermixed kingdoms" (23-24).

Hence the situation allowed the immigrants to settle in the regions that are still the most economically lucrative parts of the country; one of the most lucrative cash crops, coffee, grows in all Oromoo inhabited territories of the nation. They had displaced many indigenous settlements and replaced previous kingdoms, imposed their culture and language after this era. Huntingford wrote, "Innarya became an easy prey to the *Galla* who, under a leader called Teso, conquered it between 1550 and 1570" (20). His records indicate that they conducted historical battles: from 1605 to 1617 and raided Gojjam and Begemdir before they were defeated by Emperor Susenyos. They formed a Borana League in 1617 to occupy Gojjam and Begemdir; however, the governor of Gojjam, Se'ela Krestos, defeated them and the league collapsed soon. After they defeated Wallo in 1620, they made series of unsuccessful invasions again in 1636, 1639, 1643, 1649, 1652, 1658, and 1661. In 683 and 1699, however, the Gudru Oromoo they won battles and in 1709 they invaded Amara dominated northern regions, looted and burnt the convent of Atronse Mariyam. Shewan kings made annual expeditions against Mecha and other occupiers, and the rivers Chacha, Adabai, and Jema were used as natural dyke against the incursions (ibid 21). Oromoo

1. Regional names such as Wollo (Wallo), Ware-Yimenu, Ware-Babo, etc., came after the Gragn invasion and eventual expansion of Oromoo tribes to the northern part of the country (Tekeletsadik 8).

challenges continued whenever internal and external political turmoil was created until they were gradually absorbed and assimilated.

The number of Afaan Oromoo speakers grew in geometric progression by the nineteenth century because:

1) The defeat of Emperor Libne Dengil by Gragh Ahmad created the first favorable situation for immigration Oromoo tribes. Muslim jihadists led by Gragh massacred a large number of Christians mercilessly; those who escaped were forced to inhabit the most un-navigable mountainous northern regions leaving the fertile low lands for the invaders. The Oromoo had conflict with Somali pastorals on one hand and the Adal Muslims lead by Gragh on the other hand. However, Gragh did not want to confront the Oromoos since he did not want to create another front with the people who were indifferent to any religious movement. So, the power vacuum gave them a safe haven to immigrate into the hinterland, fertile low lands, replacing the fleeing Christian people. Although Emperors Gelawdewos, Susenyos, Sertse Dengil, Iyasu I tried to suppress the invasion, Oromoo immigration continued. Later the creation of *Zemene-mesafint* from the time when Ras Michael Sehul deposed Emperor Iyoas (1769) to the rise of Emperor Tewodros II (1855), the central state had very loose control over sultanates, Emirs and kings leaving them to enjoy relative independence. This helped Oromoo expansion.

2) The persecution of Christians similar to racial cleansing conducted by Gragh's invading force that affected especially the productive male sector directly and indirectly reduced the Christian population compared to the new settlers. Then every Galla male had to serve in compulsory military campaigns while the Christian male was either a farmer, *chewa* (belonging to nobility) *awedash*, *kedash* (priestly roles), and a relatively small number went to war. This helped the expansion of Oromoo people.

3) They had no marriage restrictions as compared to the Christians². There was a very little place for jealousy in Oromoo culture on sexual behavior (ibid 223-228). There was also no racial hindrance to marriage; an Oromoo national could marry any other member of ethnicity which helped extension of families and the language (Lewis 58-60). Children whose father passes away will not become orphans; their uncle will automatically marry their mother and will father them through a custom known as *sera warsaa* avoiding the number of widows that also helped to keep up the family.

4) The Oromoo relatively enjoyed peaceful life since most natives welcomed them even after Ahmed Gragh was killed and Christian rule was restored mostly due to their assimilation with the indigenous peoples. They used different adoption methods to assimilate other indigenous people – *moogassa*, *meedhicha*, and *harmoa-hodha* (Etefa 43-48). Oromoo occupiers forced most of their captives to pass through an assimilation ritual process known as *Moogassa through* which

2. Oromoos have a code of ethics known as *Warsa* by which a man automatically becomes the husband of a deceased brother's wife taking the responsibility of raising his brother's children as a father and taking the management of his household in total.

they were forced to make a covenant with the occupiers – to like what the Oromoos liked, to hate what Oromoos hated, to protect the interest of Oromoos, to believe in what they believe in, and to speak Afaan Oromoo. Oromization took place in the west, south, east, center, and north (Wallo) and previous inhabitants were persuaded or forced to accept Oromoo culture and even Oromoo names (Lewis 38). At that time, although Oromoos believed in Waqa (also meaning sky), they were generally pagans and were easy to adapt to any faith. Hence all these camouflaged and exaggerated the Oromoo population.

5) Peaceful Oromoo expansion was unabated until resisted. They raided and forcefully displaced Christian and other indigenous inhabitants in all places even after a Christian rule was restored while the Amara rulers were fighting among themselves for rivalry. Raiding and looting was the common practice of their campaigns. They recruited their captives to fight with them. They uniformly invaded other indigenous people also, and the trend of their movement was to occupy land but not to create a central nation-state. They destroyed kingdoms of Damot, Ganz, Bizama, Janjero, Sharka, Fatagar, Dawaro, Angota, etc. But they neither built an empire since they were not united and often fought among each other as will be explained later in the article.

Melbaa's statements like, "... *Galla* invasion of Ethiopia is also a tale" (13), ignore or deny the fact that Oromoo tribes immigrated from the east and occupied the bulk of the indigenous peoples and their lands on one hand and all the Ethiopian history before the era of Emperor Menelik II on the other. However, facts must show us that either the pre-existence of an Oromian empire or kingdom that is similar to the present ideal boundary, or whether or not Oromoo tribes occupied no man's land since the 16th century until Emperor Menelik II rose from Shewa and colonized a sovereign "Oromia State" creating an Ethiopian empire for the first time in history. The fact he mentioned in his own book (p 46) that the Shewan king got arms from Gondar to fight the Oromoo raiders was an indication to himself that the "Abyssinian" empire, among others, included Shewa. The author's acknowledgment that Emperor LibneDengil fled from Shewa to Wallo and Begemdir area is another indicative to himself that the emperor moved within the same empire. So, the "Abyssinian Empire" was not limited to the north.

The world is full of evidences that nobody can steal or deny facts that the ancient Ethiopian history that is old as those of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Greece... An Ethiopian or an Oromoo must be proud of the Ethiopian history, our common past. If one denies that to promote an ethnic issue, historians like Dr. David Levine will laugh at them, because trying to create history by denying one's own ancestry is absurd and infantile. An historian put it this way:

The Ethiopian is a great race, probably the oldest. It is a race that does not die out under adversity. When other races are sullen or despairing and turn to self-destruction, these people cheerfully press on. When they think the way is blocked they turn aside to pick flowers along the pathway of pleasure.

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/afr/we/we03.htm>

An Ethiopian ancient Kingdom known as Da'mt ruled Ethiopia when Sabaeans came from South Arabia around 1000 B. C. In the 10th century B.C., there was an Ethiopian queen by the name Azeb or Saba or Sheba whose palace remains has been found in the present Tigray at Roha. Arab

writers put her as the queen of Yemen; it has to be noted that Yemen and Ethiopia used to be under the same empire at a time in history (Dinberu 25-26). Aksumite rule included South Arabia in 80 to 265 AD. Emperor Ezana of Ethiopia (320s – c. 360 AD) ruled from Nubia in the west, to south Egypt in the north, south Arabia, and northern Somalia in the east. Emperor Caleb had control over Nubia; Meore, Napata, and south Arabia (present day Yemen) from 525 to 575 AD (Sergew 107, Pankhurst 52). When Emperor Caleb liberated Christians in Arabia from persecution by Jews in the 6th century AD, the whole horn of Africa that included the present Somalia was under the dominance of his state. It was objectively proved that Ge'ez was not only an Ethiopian language but an ancient language in literature used by Ethiopian state by 2000 B. C. and by the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian Church since the birth of Jesus Christ (Sergew 11). Since the birth of Jesus Christ alone, Ethiopia was ruled by king of kings or emperors and Haile Selassie was the 225th leader in the Solomonic dynasty. For example: Emperor Zera-Yaqo defeated Adal and Mogadishu in 1445 and secured the southern commercial center in Mogadishu, Brava, and Merca. The Sultanate of Adal was under Ethiopia and used to pay tribute to E. Zara Yaqob (Marcus 26). The name 'Somali' was mentioned for the first time in the victory songs of Emperor Yeshaq I (1421-1437) after a war on Somalia in consolidation of the empire; and the Walasma Chronicle of 1415 confirms this (Dinberu 26-27). So, since Somalia was previously under Ethiopian Empire, the migration of Oromoo from that part of the country to the central part of the present Ethiopia is not immigration from a foreign country. However, this is not to ignore people from Oromoo origin that live in Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda. It is believed that the Maasai pastoral nomads with larger population in Kenya and Tanzania who have the history of mobility in the Rift Valley area of East Africa, are related to Oromoo ancestors. According to their own [oral history](#), the Maasai originated from the lower Nile valley north of Lake Turkana and began migrating south around the 15th century.

Several changes of the power structure were manifested by changes of centers of the empire like Roha, Axsum, Debre Berhan, Gondar, Ankober, and Addis Abeba. Expansion, contraction, disintegration, and reunification had taken place several times. Internal conflicts among different popular powers for supremacy (the Agaw, Beja, Jews, Ge'ez speakers, Damot, Walasma, and other local rivals), natural disasters like famine and epidemic diseases, causes due to religious expansion, pastoral life, and commercial business were vehicles of migration and integration of different races. The original migrants learned farming and horse riding from the highlanders; their belief in one God (Waq) seems a past inheritance from Abaraham that hardly kept its originality through historical changes; they adopted either Islam or Christian religion in course of time. Historical records show that Oromoo tribes were assimilated with other tribes that made Ethiopia a melting pot of countless races that became an identity by itself. Ethiopians today, whether they come from north, south, east or west, irrespective of their races, religions, and languages are identified by their looking, the color of their skin, their posture, the way they walk, their dress, their hair, their food, and even their behavior. Today, there is no pure Oromoo race, but Oromoo language. No one can identify an Oromoo from any other Ethiopian until one speaks the language; hence, an Oromoo is a typical Ethiopian.

Melbaa has the concept that “Ethiopia” was a common denomination to people who lived south of Egypt between the Red Sea in the east and the Atlantic Ocean in the west, and south of the Sahara desert and threw most of Ethiopian history into garbage and informed his audience that the term “Ethiopia itself was myth or tale”. The politically motivated invention of Oromia just a few decades ago cannot create any historical base to deny the existence of the worldwide known history of the country that is thousands of years old. Denial of Ethiopia by an Oromoo is denial of oneself. He says that the right to name a people or a country belongs to its people, not to foreigners; like the correct denomination of *Galla* is Oromoo; but he does not allow Ethiopians to call themselves Ethiopians but Abyssinians from “Abyssinia”, a name that some foreigners relate to an ancient *Habeshat* tribe that immigrated from the Middle East to Ethiopia. It is not surprising if foreigners prefer Abyssinia to Ethiopia. He should have seen that colonialists would like a divided Ethiopia, and localized Ethiopians of ethnic groups and not a great nation comparable to them. Oromoos traditionally say “Sidama” when they refer to Amaras while Amaras and other groups say *Galla*³ when they refer to Oromoos, as Germans call themselves Dutch while others call them Germans. Similar dual names are: Persia-Iran, Mesopotamia-Iraq, Yanks-Americans, Ottoman-Turks, *Ruskie*-Russians, Netherlands-Holland, Cambria-Wales, Paddy-Irish, *Chinky*-Chinese, *faranje* to mean a white man (by Ethiopians), etc. Such usages start spontaneously and become part of the vocabulary of a language as more and more people apply them in everyday communication. From my findings, I do not think that the term “galla” was originally created by Amara people to despise a people since “galla” does not have any literal meaning in Amharic. It was originally used to refer to any people that had no religion. The Oromoo infiltrators of that era were typical of such denomination since they were generally categorized as pagans. However, changing such words like “galla” into “Oromoo” can cut off historical traces and hinder the transfer of knowledge of the past to the present or future. Name changing will distort possible future archaeological or other discoveries that may reveal a historical link to “galla”. The Oromoo language itself belongs to Afro-Asiatic group along with Amharic and other Ethiopian languages. That goes along the fact that most Ethiopian ethnic groups have relationship with the Middle East peoples. And since the birth and development of a language is a natural social phenomenon beyond political decision, trying to make artificial changes might distort and negatively affect natural developments (Dinberu 59-66).

Although he avoids to mention the earlier history, Melbaa acknowledges that the Yejju and Wallo ruling families of Warra Sheka and Wara Hemmanu respectively were founded in the 1700's; however, he did not enlighten us on how the Yejju Oromoo family ruled Ethiopia from Gondar before the rise of Tewodros.(p.34). He mentioned a little about early kingdoms that existed in the western Ethiopian Empire before they were occupied by Mecha Oromoo tribe that established Gibe kingdoms (Jimma, Limmu-Enarya, Gumma, Gomma, and Gera) in 1800-1830. He mentioned about the battle of Chelenqo and Menelik's expansion but did not delve into who appointed the Emir of Harar and the real threatening power behind him. In fact the Emirate did not represent the Oromoo people who were only neighbors. He concluded that Menelik's colonial expansion annexed Harar without having to go back to any previous history and without looking

3 Ethiopian Christians in old days identified “galla” for any unbaptized pagan people.

into the other aspect of foreign colonial interests and the fate of that part of Africa in the absence of Menelik's intervention. His abhorrence to Menelik's occupation of Harar lacks purpose from his own statement, "It was not only Menelik who was preparing to occupy Harar. After the evacuation of the Egyptians, Harar was bound to fall into the hands of either the Abyssinians or the Italians" (p 56).

Melbaa concluded that all the missions of Emperor Tewodros, Yohannis IV, Menelik, and Hale-Selassie were colonial expansions. He does not see the historical fact that all the hitherto existing nations were built by classical military unification or consolidation. We also know that there were conflicts among Oromoo leagues; the Afre and Sadachaa groups were created due to conflicts based on expansion, between Mecha and Tullamaa tribes before they reconciled; Ennarya, Janjero, Bizamo, Bosha, Konch, Arababni, Nonno, and many other territories were targets of conflicts. There were conflicts between Abba Jiffar of Jimma and Abba Bagibo of Limmu-Ennarya due to Jimma's expansionist ambitions over Gibe states and beyond. Abba Bokuu of Jimma had a rule that 4 men from Gumma must be killed by a man before one anoints himself (The HAKLUYT Society I xxxvii). While expansion was order of the day, some of nationalist writers like Melbaa associate *neftegna* to all Amara families, and Menelik as a colonial occupier of sovereign states by categorizing E. Menelik's reunification of Sidama, Gurage, Arsi, Bale, Wolayita, Jimma, Harar, Limmu-Enarya, and other kingdoms and vassal states into an act of Amaran scramble for Africa by equating it to the role of France, G. Britain, and Italy. A *neftegna* by definition is any occupier who carries a gun for that mission. Although *naftagnanat* is not inherited by blood, by its literal definition, Weyanes are *neftegnas*; the Damoti troops who remained in Hadiya – the Chawa – had similar *naftagna* mission; there were Oromoo *neftegnas* under *gada* system before the era of Menelik when they invaded and occupied many parts of the country. The Bejans, Zagwes, Walasmas, etc. tried to unify Ethiopia in their own plans. Tewodros made one of the latest reunifications; Yohannes continued that and Menelik with the help of many groups including from Oromoo made the present day Ethiopia.

So, Menelik made one of the many reunifications since the reign of Zera-Yahoo (1434-1468). Other politicians commented E. Menelik for not moving on to decolonize other former parts of the country, especially Eritrea, Somalia and Djibouti. E. Menelik was a re-unifier like Otto Von Bismark of Prussia in 1871, Abraham Lincoln of the USA. Similarly, United Kingdom (1707), Italy (1861), Spain (1492), Burma (1613), Iran (1501), Portugal (1249), Saudi Arabia (1932), Canada (1867), Brazil (1852), and many other countries were created by classical military unification of different smaller kingdoms into one nation without which they could not have existed to date.

On the other hand, although its geographical area decreased from time to time, Ethiopia reserved its sovereignty while the political geography of the majority of African, Latin American, and some Asian countries were unluckily decided by colonial occupiers that created situations in which the previous colonizers could take advantage of ethnic barriers and other intentionally deferred colonial interests to intervene in a country's local issues even after independence, just as they left their venom in Eritrea, and Ogaden. Mohammad Hassen, the Oromoo writer said, "War

made the Gibe kings; all of them made war the prime business of their administration ... The concentration of power in the hands of a king was the dramatic break with the gada... ” (Hassen 93). In a similar but larger context, if the Zagwe dynasty continued, Ethiopia would have existed as Ethiopia. If Ahmad ibn Gragn was able to consolidate his power and other leaders followed suit, the power structure could have been different, but Ethiopia could still be Ethiopia. If Mecha-Tullamaa was strong enough to consolidate Ethiopia under one nation, that nation could have still been Ethiopia. But we know that there were scattered Oromoo kingdoms like Jimma, Gumma, Limmu-Ennarya, etc. similar to kingdoms of Sidama, Kaffa, Hadiya, Wallasma (Adal), etc., but no “Oromia” nation-state existed in Ethiopia. The truth was that after local kingdoms, principalities or vassal states were formally incorporated into an empire, Ethiopia was ruled by different leaders that could be linked mainly to Amara, Tigre, and Oromoo. If they remained divided, colonialists could have changed their geo-political boundaries that would have changed the social structure and could have in turn obliterated the national identities that we are talking about. It was Menelik’s skillful leadership that preserved the Oromoo identity. If Menelik did not reunite Ethiopians, Oromos would have been the first people that would have lost their common identity. It was Menelik that brought them under one Ethiopian nation. Melbaa and his disciples should understand that E. Menelik was a feudal Emperor and should be compared with his contemporaries and hence get his due credit for preserving the nation.

Melbaa and his disciples believe that Ethiopia, under the leadership of Christian Amara colonized Oromoo land and that the Oromoo people fought the Ethiopian state government in order to get rid of the colonizer since the 16th century to the present. However, in order to assert a colony and a colonial state, one must show that there must be an Oromia land and state under the gada system of government. First of all, the *gada* institution was associated more with military campaigns to raid and or occupy land than represent a stable state government. Dr Mohammed Hassen endorsing Dr. Asmerom's statement said, “...the gada class is required to wage war against a community that none of their ancestors had raided” (Hassen 10). So, it ceased to exist after Abba Bokkus settled after accumulation of power and wealth, transforming themselves to moottis (winners) similar to kings that corresponded with the era of settlements of people on agrarian and commercial life advancing into state backed by religion. For a state to exist, it must have a limited geographical location, a stable and sovereign state-government recognized at least by its neighbors. On the other hand, the Ethiopian state-government or any other country has never recognized them as a state but as raiders that destroyed settlements and disrupted agricultural life. So, most Oromoo immigrants ended up in occupying land and making gradual advances from pastoral to settled agricultural life. There was no Oromia state but smaller Gibe states of Jimma, Limmu-Ennarya, Gomma, Gumma, and Gera, that began to sprout in the early 19th century. Compare these with Kafa, Gimira, Ennarya, Damot, Dawaro, Angot, Ifat, ...and many many more.

On the other hand, as stated above, the Ethiopian history and its official language Ge'ez existed for over 4000 years. This is not myth but proved by different scientific records (Dinberu 24). On the other hand, in order to say that Oromia was colonized by another country, there must have been an Oromia state in the first place. What history knows and the evidences behind his book tell

are that Oromoo tribes originated from Borana and Berithuma family that lived in the south east corner of Ethiopia and migrated and raided all the rest of indigenous people in the rest of Ethiopia. It is not to conclude that Oromoos are alien to Ethiopia. No, Oromoo tribes might have lived in any part of Ethiopia; however, before their invasion of Bali in 1522, no recorded history was found that indicated Oromoo government institution in the present Oromoo occupied regions of Ethiopia. To say that there was an Oromia nation-state in the present regions inhabited by Oromoo people denies the history of kingdoms, vassal states, provinces or principalities (*awrajas*) of Balie, Gimira, Gera, Kafa, Walasma or Adal, Afar (Garads), Somali (Sultanates), Shewa, Merhabetie, Fatagar (now Bulga, Menjar, and Yerer), Arababni (Ifat area), Endegebtan (west of Endothnah, Endothnah (an ancient name for Entoto, now Addis Ababa (Finfine), Angot, Garo, Mao, Gofa, Mocha, Maji, Guduruu, Basso, Bela Shangul, Gumuz, Leqa Qellam, Leqa Nakamte, Wambara, Wambarma, Chara, Assendabo (Qawo), Gamo, Bosha, Gomma, Dahra, Tambaro, Ganz, konch, Gedem, Bizamo, Dawaro (now Awash, Kereyu, and part of Arsi), Ennarya, Janjero (also Maya (later Arusi, and now Arsi), Damot, Waj, Bizamo, Wallaga, Gedebicho, Gudella, Diho, Doba, Hadebo, Sega, Gab, Kabe, Gogala, Alaba, Watojira, Sheshego, Malgie, Bushe, Mareqo, Hadiya, most Sidama, Kullo, Sharka, Wallo (formerly Betha Amara, Lako Melza), Zeila, Harar, and many others. The administrative or political boundaries of many of these have changed over time. For example, Zeila, Ifat, and Harar used to be the center of a big state in different times. Many of these were kingdoms while some are provinces the demarcation of which is difficult to show with boundaries today.

Nilotic and Omotic peoples have deeper and ancient histories. They were also affected by invasive and expansive wars in the process of formation or consolidation of the present Ethiopia bringing about provincial or regional names like Gambella, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gamo Gofa.

Melbaa held that the Oromoo were better-off under Italian occupation and that General Graziani had allowed Oromoo publication in Afaan Oromoo. However, he must understand that Italy came to colonize Ethiopia, not to free any people and such a colonialist nation needed to exploit the internal division or conflicts by being attractive in disguise of a “liberator”. So, by rational reasoning, he had enough information to see that Italians, British, Belgians and French, especially as manifested in their 1884 agreement to share Africa, were sparing any efforts and making separate agreements with local chiefs, sultanates, Emirs or kings in order to obliterate a united Ethiopia to curb a national feeling of the Ethiopian peoples in this part of Africa and all Ethiopians needed withstanding such foreign challenges for survival under a leadership that could unite them; and history made Menelik its leader.

His map on page 61 shows that, there is no Ethiopian land, except the Gondar area, that had not been inhabited by Oromoo people. If he accepted that the Yejju Oromoo ruled Ethiopia from Gondar, then he could see that there has been no Ethiopian land where Oromoo people did not step on. Melbaa acknowledges that land in Ethiopia was held in collective ownership; but he also says that Menelik confiscated land. It should be understood that the “collective ownership” predominantly refers to pastoral land inhabited by nomadic people.

He acknowledged that, during the reign of Menelik, traditional Oromoo leaders/*balabats* like Damina, Garaadas, Abbaa Burqaas, or Abbaa Qoros who used to hold a third of the local holding taxed and ruled the Oromoo people as agents of the Ethiopian state government.

However, he could not see that these *balabats* were part of the feudal system without which they or their state could exist and function at that time. And he could have seen that Oromoo leaders like Ras Gobana and Fitawrari Habte-Giorgis had their own Oromoo army and had the power to make national issues that included war in their domains.

He stated that five out of ten million Oromoo people died during the war between the Ethiopian state government of and the Oromoo people in the 17th century based on the estimation of missionaries like Johann L. Krapf (German) and a French writer, Martial de Slaviac (p 65). However, he did not trace statistical, demographic or any methodological evidence. He did not indicate the number of the Ethiopian state troops or people killed by Oromoo fighters. His source of information does not even correspond those facts with the total Ethiopian population at that time, that was doubtful to be near to ten million in total, or if he meant that only Oromoo people lived in the country at that time? We cannot accept opinions of writers like L. Krapf, Darkwah (British) and Martial de Slavfiac or anybody else unless they were based on objective substance. One of the Portuguese missionaries who accompanied Almeda stated that the land of Sidama reaches as far as Nyasaland. This man was neither a historian nor a geographer. Simply because he put his guess statement in a book cannot be taken as a reliable reference. So, Melbaa should have evaluated the source of information that the writers used before accepting it and disseminating the bias among our peoples.

The *gabbar* feudal system was a bad scar for oppressed peasants especially in southern Ethiopia. There were *gabbars* of Sidama, Hadiya, Kambata, Oromoo, and many others. However, this was not based on race; it was based on the worst feudal land tenancy. Melbaa must see that the archaic feudal system led by Emperor Haile-Selassie motivated by class interests did not single out Oromoos, and that was why there were peasant rebellions Gojjam, Tigray and Wallo, etc., and Ethiopians irrespective of any racial differences fought and brought about the 1974 popular revolution that toppled the old system.

I was glad to learn from Dr. Mohammed Hassen, an Oromoo who wrote that the term *gabbare* originated from Oromoo. He wrote,

The Oromoo term for the conquered people was gabbaro (“those who serve”). The Oromoo adopted the gabbaro en masse, giving them clan genealogy marrying their women, and taking their young into service for herding. Simultaneously, adult men were recruited for military service in times of war, and worked on the land in times of peace.... (63). When the rights of the gabbaro were trampled upon, their women and children were sold into slavery by their Oromoo masters, the yhabata rebelled all over the Mecha land.... (64). Since the gabbaro rebelled against both the Afre and the Sadacha, the two groups made peace with each other. They forgot their recent quarrels and became fused together with a new spirit of self-preservation which never left them until the danger was over Convince by experiences that it was an

opportune moment to make peace with the Tulamaa, the Matca appealed to the latter for help. The Tulamaa's response was quick and positive....”(64- 65).

So, Oromoo invaders forced/persuaded indigenous inhabitants to pass through a ritual of oath called *moggassaa* and the whole community was adopted by the occupiers and hence Oromized. The Mecha used a prestigious name for the captives – “yahabata” – those who are mounted. The gabbaro rebelled against Afre and Sadachaa led by the yahabata threatening the Matcha Oromoo supremacy. It was that danger that made the warring groups of Tulamaa and Mecha to make peace with each other – to suppress the rebellion. Subsequently, the gabbaro sought assistance from Se’ela Christos, Governor of Gojjam, and eventually settled in Wambarya and Wambarma districts of Gojjam. “Gabbaro” modified through time to “Gabbare” has become a common word to mean a peasant in Ethiopia. So, an Amharic word *gabbare* means a farmer and *Gebbar* (payer) means a peasant also expressed in another Amharic word, *chisagna* to mean a tenant.

A history reader should see that any war captive in any society could be enslaved and fall under the cultural domination of the victor and that Amarization and Christianization did not have any expression different than the Oromization explained above. Jimma Abba Jifar owned as many as ten thousand slaves personally and that it was common for any Oromoo landlord to have a thousand slaves (ibid 31. Lewis 66). Bear in mind that Emperor Menelik was criticized for his phonetic expression other than his objective to abolish slavery. After his last expeditions when the emperor declared, “No man including a *Galla* should be sold”⁴, this was punctuated and often quoted as an evidence of chauvinism.

The fact is that we share the same tradition and the Oromoo culture itself has made a significant contribution to the national Ethiopian culture. In the making of the present Ethiopia, Oromoos fought Muslim expansionists and resisted the Gragn forces at the start before he stopped resisting their movement. They fought back the incursion of Somali nomads and were also pushed to the south and west by the Somalis since the 16th and 17th centuries. Oromoo militants shed their blood against the fascist Italian invasions in 1896 at Adwa and in 1936-41 throughout the country. They and fellow Ethiopians fought against the Somali invasion in 1977 and many times. Oromoo participation in state leadership in the 16th century and continued until the rise of Atse Tewodros in 1855 and then. They were state leaders in Wallo, Jimma, Shewa, etc. There were countless state leaders who played significant roles in Ethiopian nation building. Ras Mekonnen Weldemichael Gudissa, Queen Taaitu, Emperor Menelik, Haile-Selassie, Mengistu Hailemariam Lencho had Oromoo blood through their close relatives. Dejazmach Balchab Abba Nefso and Ras Gobena Dache were examples of prominent Oromoo statesmen who contributed to the building of the present Ethiopian nation-state.

Oromoo language has not only taken but has given so many phrases or vocabulary to the Amharic language. For example, *gudifecha*, *harma-hodha* (adoption systems), *gumaa*/compensation for loss of life/, etc. Out of the huge amounts, only some selected phrases/words that indicate the

4 We know from history that Menelik’s last and bitter wars ended with Arsi Oromoo people. His statement was an indication that he did not want to revenge them by enslavement as was customarily used to happen before.

relationship of Amharic and Oromoo languages are cited here below. These words are taken from a 1913 study of a London based institution⁵. They are selected also to show cultural similarities.

Afaan Oromoo	Sound	Amharic	Afaan Oromoo	Sound	Amharic
adaraa	አደራ	አደራ	Gojjoo	ጎጆ	ጎጆ
Adbaara	አብዳሪ	አብዳር	Gossa	ጎሰ	ጎሳ
Alanga/abba alanga/	አለንጋ	አለንጋ /ዳኛ/	Gubboo	ጉቦ	ጉቦ
Amoolee	አሞሌ	አሞሌ	Guddii	ጉዲ	ጉድ
Babbura	ባቡረ	ባቡር	Guddiifachaa	ጉዲፈቻ	ጉዲፈቻ
Barchuuma	ቦርጩማ	ቦርጩማ	Guliichaa	ጉልቻ	ጉልቻ
Biimbii	ቢምቢ	ቢምቢ	Gurraa	ጉራ	ጉራ
Buluuqoo	ቡሉኮ	ቡሉኮ	Haankaasee	ሐንካሴ	አንካሴ
Chabtoo	ጭብጦ	ጭብጦ	Immaagnii	እማኚ	እማኝ
Challee	ጨሌ	ጨሌ	Jaannoo	ጃኖ	ጃኖ
Chubbitoo	ጨቡጦ	ጭብጦ	Aamata	ዓመተ	ዓመት
Chukoo	ጨኮ	ጨኮ	Kambari	ቀምበሪ	ቀምበር
Daabboo	ዳቦ	ዳቦ	Qitta	ቂጣ	ቂጣ
Distii	ዲስቲ	ድስት	Koraa/Korricha	ኮራ/ኮርቻ	ኮርቻ
Doqaa	ዶቃ	ዶቃ	Korojoo	ኮሮጆ	ኮሮጆ
gabbaree	ገበሬ	ገበሬ	Qafoo	ቀፎ	
Gabattee	ገበቴ	ገበቴ	Laayidaa	ላይዳ	ላይዳ
gaaddii	ጋዲ	ጋዲ	Lootii	ሎቲ	ሎቲ
Gaara	ጋረ	ጋ	Maallaqa/money/	ማለቀ	መሐለቅ
Bassoo	በሶ	በሶ	Maammaa	ማማ	ማማ
Gasoo	ገሶ	ገሶ	Masingqoo	ማሲንቆ	ማሲንቆ
Gofaree	ጎፈሬ	ጎፈሬ	Maassaa	ማሳ	ማሳ

⁵ Clay, John. An Afaan Oromoo-English English-Afaan Oromoo Dictionary. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913.

Afaan Oromoo	Sound	Amharic	Shamaanee	ሸማኔ	ሸማኔ
Mataabira	መጣቢረ	መጣብር	Shanqoora	ሸንኮረ	ሸንኮራ
Mala	መለ	መላ	Shaqata	ሸቀጠ	ሸቀጥ
Mushuuraa	መ-ሸራ	መ-ሸራ	Suuqii	ሱቂ	ሱቅ
Moofara	ሞፈረ	ሞፈር	Shaashii	ሻሺ	ሻሽ
Afaan Oromoo	Sound	Amharic	Shiftaa	ሸፍታ	ሸፍታ
Mooraa	ሞራ	ሞራ	Shinkurtii	ሸንኩርቲ	ሸንኩርት
Afaan Oromoo	Sound	Amharic	Shuuruubaa	ሸሩባ	ሸሩባ
Nadoo	ነዶ	ነዶ	Sissoo	ሲሶ	ሲሶ
Nagada	ነገደ	ንግድ	Taaitu	ጣይቱ	ጣይቱ
Digira/Digiirrii	ዲጊራ	ድግር	Tuuruumbaa	ጡሩምባ	ጥሩምባ
Qaaluu/Qaalichaa	ቃልቻ	ቃልቻ	Wageesaa	ወጌሳ	ወጌሻ
Sagada	ሰገደ	ሰግደት	Warqii	ወርቂ	ወርቅ
Salaamtaa	ሰላምታ	ሰላምታ	Warqittu	ወርቂቱ	ወርቂቱ
Shaklaa	ሸክላ	ሸክላ	Zinaara	ዝናረ	ዝናር

In fact the Amharic language was born out of Ge'ez, Arab, Agaw, and developed by Oromoo and many other languages. So, as Afaan Oromoo has taken much from Amharic language, it has also contributed to the growth of Amharic language. This is how Ethiopian languages developed (Dinberu 59).

Melbaa mentioned some filthy phrases to substantiate the humiliation of the Oromoo people by Amara people. Although I can recite much more phrases used by Oromoo people against other Oromoo people, Amara against other Amara, etc., I would rather neither quote his phrases nor write any other such phrases since it has no good use other than disseminating hatred among people. However, Melbaa and his associates should understand that there have been social prejudices among any people in the world. However, as culture develops, confidence follows suit and such belittling phrases remain no more than fun (for Melbaa's audience: Please try to watch one of the American night shows to see how people make fun of statesmen and the president).

What is amazing is that a memorial monument was erected at Anolee based on fictitious stories like “የቡርቃው ዝምታ” by the Eritrean political zealot, Tesfaye Gebreab. It is just like suing in court “Iyago”, the villain figure in “Othello”, or Fitawrari Meshesha in “ፍቅር እስከ መቃብር”.

Melbaa's analysis of racism goes back to Sahle Selassie's and Tewodros' times. It should be understood that first of all Tewodros was born of a Quara minority nationality. Unlike some narrow nationalists of the 21st century, Tewodros was not racially motivated but had the lust for power to unite Ethiopia that had been divided into local princes, kings, sultans, emirs, etc. As a dictator, he probably killed more Christian Amaras than Oromoos; he killed like 800 priests in a single incident in Gondar. For Melbaa's surprise, the Gondare people take him as their own leader and appreciate his desire to build a united Ethiopia. Melbaa must see that peasant rebellions in Gojjam (many times, Tigray, and Wallo were against the feudal system and the response of Haile-Selassie was motivated by class interests that did not single out Oromoos.

Melbaa and the readers of his book must understand that Egyptians, Italians, French, and the British had to encourage racial or any other division among Ethiopians for their colonial interest. They had encouraged Sheik Tola Jaafar to go to Sudan and ask cooperation of Mahdi. We know their conspiracy with Sudanese Mahdists since the Treaty in Adwa of 1884 signed between Atse Yohannis and Britain, treaty that gave free path to Egyptian troops under the British colony, that caused the Mahdists to retaliate and invade Gondar, where E. Yohannis IV was killed, while they encouraged Menelik to rise from the south at which time Britain tore the treaty and handed Massawa to Italy as a result of which the Italians were free to occupy Eritrea. It was the scheme of our common enemies – the colonizers that encouraged “Western *Galla* Confederation” under the chairmanship of Kumsa Moroda to refuse fighting the invading Italian force in 1936. Similarly imperialists encouraged establishment of a Somali Youth League in 1943; this league reorganized itself to “Liberation Front for the Somali West” (also known as “Somali Galbed”) that claimed Hararge, Arsi, Bale, Sidamo as the “lost territories of Somalia”. It was in that strategy that the Siad Barre regime invaded Ethiopia in 1978. If Melbaa supports LFSW, he must have claimed a Somali national, not of Oromoo.

In order to build up his ideology, Melba also categorized the *derg* as a racist regime stating that Oromoo youth were more victim in the “Red Terror” campaign, and said, “It was enough to be Oromoo to be suspected which led to arrest and death” (p 81/2). The *derg* was a dictatorial regime that tried to annihilate its opponents indiscriminately. EPRP and OLF were the most known targets. *derg* did not target the Oromoo people as a race but its political enemies. Melbaa must remember that MEISON was once favored among the Oromoos while on the other hand it collaborated with the *derg* to annihilate EPRP members. Melba singled out that Oromoo folks were evicted from their lands, famine killed so many Oromoo people; Oromoo folks were arrested and imprisoned, etc. during the reign of the *derg*. Other peoples were also evicted from their lands; famine killed many Ethiopians; the number of casualties in Amara, Tigray, Gondar, Afar, etc. was so big that it was incomparable to the number of deaths in the larger Oromoo regions. This manifested the fact that more wet and fertile regions in Ethiopian are occupied by Oromoo folks, the fact that made its inhabitants less exposed to such natural disasters.

It must be learnt that imperialists had made us defenseless and sanctioned us from natural growth. They had kept down economic development of Ethiopia by denying international aid even during the feudal regime. After the 1960 coup attempt by the Neway brothers that exposed the miserable

life in Ethiopia, Emperor Haile-Selassie repeatedly asked the British, French, Italians and the USA for financial assistance. All of them gave deaf ear to multi-million economic development project studies. The regime presented its financial request to President Lyndon Johnson's and Richard Nixon's administration. Then Emperor Haile-Selassie was forced to turn his face to the East but only in vain; the Chinese might have helped him only if he had been a revolutionary like Ho Chi Minh, but he was a feudal monarch. Not only was his demise expected, but also the demise of the country as a whole. They knew the worsening situation of the country due to poverty. It was not because they did not want to support a feudal regime, but they preferred their national interests and did not want preserve or create a strong Ethiopia without any returns. And that was why they rather were encouraging insurgencies in the north, east and south. One thing is certain: however much they had internal conflicts, at the end of the story, Ethiopians, be it Oromoos, Tigres, Sidamas, Hadyas, or others united against the foreign enemies. The country's under-development had its consequence especially on the rural life.

In search of pastoral lands, the indigenous Negele Borana inhabitants were pushed away from their pastoral lands by families from Bali and other Somali people; the Gheri Somali migration was common. The Guutuu family, led by Waqo Guutu revolted primarily when the Ethiopian government tried to quell the conflict by ordering the Guutu family as well as the Somalis to leave from the Borana lands they occupied. Then in early 1960's the collision of the Somalis with the Guutu family was changed to collaboration and the Waqo Guutu group was armed with Somali government help. Waqo joined Aliyyi Chirri in the revolt. Waqo was tipped by Emperor Haile-Selassie and suspended his revolt until the break of the 1974 revolution and the revolt was suspended when Siad Barre made a coup in 1969 since the military suspended support. Later the Waqo Guutu – Waqo Luugo – Waaqo-Chirri – Abba Washa – Hajji Ysihaq group joined LFSW that started occupying some Ethiopian territories in 1977. The Mecha – Tullamaa association was also targeted by derg since its ties with the Bale movement. So, OLF was targeted by the Ethiopian government also due to its connection to Somalia's expansionist scheme. So, one can see that the immediate cause of the Balie revolt did not initially start as a national issue but a local conflict among neighboring people due to grazing land that the feudal regime did not handle properly while the Somali regime exploited the conflict for its expansionist scheme.

Conclusion

Ethiopia is an ancient country consisting of many ethnic groups. The history of Ethiopia is the history of wars: civil wars in competition to occupy territories and power. The country had also passed through wars of resistance against foreign aggression. Although colonizers many times took advantage of internal conflicts, the general trend of our history shows that our peoples postponed internal conflicts to untie against common enemies, like the Egyptians, Mahdists, and Italians. Due to these circumstances, Ethiopia was isolated from the rest of the world for hundreds of years within its natural barriers. Hence, the cultural and economic development of the country as a whole lagged behind and still over 80% of the people depend on ox-driven plough farming and natural rains. The economic analysis of the Gibe region by Dr. Mohammed indicates that the interdependence of the people was manifested by

commercial and cultural relation as far as Massawa and Gondar in the north, Harar and Zeila in the east, Sappa and Bonga in the west, and the south. [A 2014 demographic index](#) of the Ethiopian population indicates the following estimates: Oromoo 34.4%, Amhara (Amara) 27%, Somali (Somali) 6.2%, Tigray (Tigrinya) 6.1%, Sidama 4%, Gurage 2.5%, Welaita 2.3%, Hadiya 1.7%, Afar (Affar) 1.7%, Gamo 1.5%, Gedeo 1.3%, Silte 1.3%, Kefficho 1.2%, other 10.5% (2007 est.). The diversity of our peoples had never been a problem in our history as cultural, economic and social integration was high. However other current indices indicate deplorable situation of the people in general – birth rate: 37.66/1000, general death rate: 8.52/1000, infant mortality rate: 55.77/1000, maternal mortality rate: 350 deaths/1000 live births. The [GDP index](#) of 2014 that adds the few very rich with the majority poor ranks the country between 83 and 85 out of around 193 countries. The 2012 poverty head count showed 39% of the population below poverty line. According to GDP base on [Purchasing-Power-Parity \(PPP\)](#) per capita, Ethiopia ranked 171 out of 184 countries in the world. Although the country is rich in natural resources, since only the few privileged have monopolized the economy and peoples' participation in the economic development has been restricted, the living standard of the peoples has remained at a very low level.

Oromoo regions are resourceful and economically well off compared to the northern parts of Ethiopia including Gondar and Tigray which had been hard hit by continuous wars, drought and diseases. Just as the rest of Ethiopians', the Oromoo culture could develop more; but segregation in ethnic boundaries could not engender any progress. However, economic development can happen much better when the ethnic wall is torn down and peoples' mobility is free irrespective of language, religion and other primitive restrictions. The Oromoo culture can develop when an Oromoo, Amara, Tigray, Gurage, Sidama, Adare, etc can freely run any business venture in any part of the country, including Jimma, Harar, Wallaga, etc. where amicable domestic interdependence can bolster competition with foreign market. So, Melbaa and similar thinkers need to weigh the advantages of free mobility and integration of people versus balkanization for remedy to cultural and economic progress.

However, we have common problems that we should rather focus at. The major/basic problems are:-

- 1) There has never been free and fair election in the country especially after the 1974 popular revolution that brought down the feudal monarchy. The revolution was hijacked by dictators: military derg and racist Weyane that rode wagons of change and crashed it in a row and made the people voiceless subjects. The recent tyrannical Weyane regime acting like internal colonizer uses ethnically divided regional governments that it manipulates through its own one-party rule by using surrogate parties and recruit cadres.
- 2) Today, a great number of people could not overcome hunger and the country has not been self-sufficient. Millions of underfed families could not send healthy children to school. Public health and medical services are at the lowest stage; drinking water is not available to the 84% of the rural people and water supply is not reliable in urban areas, too.

3) Centuries old cultural stagnation could not take out our current politicians from the abyss of ethnic ideological cancer. By taking advantage of this primitive ideology, the ruling regime from day one designed this divisive instrument to create ethnic animosity among the people where unseen religious and racial conflicts flared resulting in social instability manifested by mass eviction and emigration. So, what followed was under-development in which the regime also sold farmers' lands to foreign collaborationist exploiters and displaced native peoples. This denied national entrepreneurs from investment and increased the number of jobless people.

4) The leading western countries, the USA and Great Britain for example, that are supposed to be defenders, proponents, or advocates of human rights and democracy rather financed the repressive current regime to promote their national interests. The Weyane regime succeeded in maneuvering circumstances in pretense of anti-terrorist while it actually heads a state of terror among its own peoples. The ruling regime is running a plutocracy rule monopolizing the state power and economic development by creating a privileged class in its own narrow circle at the expense of the sovereignty of the country and poverty of the rest of the peoples. The regime is keeping down popular causes dormant that might erupt into unrest and relapsing civil strife.

History has shown us that narrow nationalism that revives around racial circles blinded by self-centrism – denial of others' interests ended up in dictatorship as we saw from the time of Stalin to Radovan Karadzic and Slobodan Milosevic to the Meles clique. Genuine public figures confident of democracy stand for basic human rights irrespective race, religion or language. But those who are neither genuine nor confident of the genuine masses try to comfort themselves around narrow tribal or ethnic circles in our case ironically serving Weyane machinations. Such sectarian groups are often trapped by personal possessions and luxurious life. So, trying to resolve the problem of the people through nationalism is tantamount to stepping down from democracy. Unlike ethnic nationalism echoed by politicians who are not confident of honest voices of the Ethiopian peoples all together, the best remedy to these basic problems is solidarity of all our peoples for common objectives.

The strength of Weyane is indirectly proportional to the weakness of its challengers; and with divided and weak challengers, the people find it difficult to trust or depend on political groups that run in their names. So, it is high time that genuine sons and daughters of the people, irrespective of race, ethnicity, and religious backgrounds, come together and form a common organization. Since separation of different popular organizations is facilitated by power mongers, mercenaries, and surrogates; the strength of genuine peoples' representatives eliminates agents of the ruling regime and power mongers that camouflage popular causes for their own hidden or disguised personal interests. To safeguard common national issues, opposition groups that are competing among each other need to make a turning point and stand in unison or create mergers by forfeiting ethnic sectarianism that serves only tyrants as an instrument of “divide and rule” policy. So, Melbaa and his disciples like Jawar Mohammad should choose between the peoples' common causes (basic human rights, justice,

equality, and democracy) and ethnic line of sectarian or apartheid teachings. However, a sectarian line can bring neither a lasting peace nor reliable livelihood. What fanning all types of past odds does is to add more civil strife but no positive change on peoples' lives; because people live in the present not in the past. And for leaders to genuinely stand for popular missions, they should betray narrow and personal interests and stand for causes of all peoples beyond ethnic borders. Lest, racial parties led by parochial leaders who do not stand for universal principles do not create love among different peoples and miss a crucial popular mission. However, by managing their differences, if opposition parties unite and form a common forum turning themselves into a few but strong opposition groups through which they can bring peoples together by addressing their common objectives engendering solidarity among different ethnic groups, that creates not only strength, but alienates the regime from the masses. A unity of opposition parties persuades donors and foreign states to keep their hands away from the tyrannical regime and also creates confidence among the peoples and motivates them to rally together with confidence making Weyane powerless; that is how we all become masters of our own destiny. "United we stand divided we fall!"

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