

The Social Construction of the Oromo *Galtuus* in the Ethiopian Empire:

Past and Present

Part I

And

Part II

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Acknowledgement

This paper has been edited by Dr. Maureen Flaherty, Associate Professor at the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies at University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Also, the following scholars – Abbas Gnamo, Gamachu Abraham, Lenjisso Horo, and Mohammed Xahiro - reviewed the paper and made useful recommendations. The author thanks all these scholars for their contributions toward the development of the paper.

The paper has been formatted by Ms. Annette Jones. The author thanks Annette for her contribution. The author is solely responsible for the content of the paper.

Part I

Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to explore the social phenomenon of Oromo *galtuu* syndrome, from Ras Gobana (Ras is feudal title) to the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), changed to ODP and then to PP.

In my previous work, I have defined a *galtuu* as:

A person who cannot make on his own; instead he depends on another person for his survival. For example, a *galtuu* cannot build his house; he cannot have his own farm; instead, he depends on someone else. He survives by providing some sort of service to the family on which he depends. More importantly, his survival depends always on the mercy of that family. [1]

I used the metaphor *galtuu* to describe the phenomenon which may explain the political behavior of those Oromos who betray their own people to gain some political/material benefits in the Ethiopian Empire. Later in the paper, I will discuss the critical distinctions between the *galtuu* who exists in the traditional rural, cultural and material settings and the more recent *galtuus* who are more educated, more informed and more sophisticated. Also, I will discuss the differences and similarities between *gantuu* and *galtuu*.

The paper has two major parts (Part I and Part II) There are six major sections.in the essay. The first section addresses the perennial question about the Oromo in the Ethiopian Empire. The second section presents the theoretical discussions on the subject of dominant/subordinate inter-relations in the modern state system. Here, various theoretical concepts from the discipline of sociology and of psychology regarding the

social phenomenon regarding the dominant-subordinate inter-relations are explored. The third section explores the formation of the Ethiopian Empire and the conquest and the subjugation of the Oromo people. The fourth section provides a brief history of patterns of Oromo responses. Here the essay demonstrates how the psychology of oppression manifested itself in the *Habesha* and Oromo relationship. The perennial question regarding the status of the Oromo people in the Ethiopia Empire is, “What is wrong with the Oromos?” Section five explores the manifestation of the psychology of liberation in the Oromo national movement. Finally, the paper focuses on the phenomenon of the Oromo *galtuu* syndrome; in this section, I bring to light the social phenomenon relative to the Oromo *galtuus* from Ras Gobana Daccie to the Oromo People’s Democratic Organization (OPDO).

Background

Two critical features are associated with the modern state system. The first is that the modern state is comprised of heterogeneous ethnic communities while only about twenty percent of the modern state has homogenous community. Still, there is a prevailing tendency by policy makers and scholars to treat states as homogenous entities with respect to policies and administration. Indeed, the contemporary manifestation of international relations, which is predicated on the state system, reinforces this pattern of political behavior on the part of the ruling class in the contemporary state system. This legacy emanates from the Westphalia Treaty of 1648, which established the supremacy of the state over different identity groups within such states. The second pre-eminent feature, which is present in the contemporary state system, is a pattern of dominance,

which governs the relationships between the various identity groups within such states. Dominance is a phenomenon, which evolves when human beings are bound together on a non-equal basis with respect to power. The most critical factor in dominance in group interrelations in a state system is power, not necessary the statistical superiority a group may enjoy. Dominance by one group in a state system emanates from the ability to control resources within the state system. Equally as significant is the tendency, which has been manifested by the subordinate groups, to resist, in some forms, the limitations imposed upon them by a dominant group in the state system characterized by domination and subjugation (more will be said on this subject later).

Related to the question of status of subordination of a group(s) in an unequal relationship, is the common interpretation as to why they have fallen into that position. The common explanation is that the subjugated group(s) are in that position due to their own failings. More specifically, questions are raised as to the nature, quality (intelligence), and competence of the subjugated group.

More than 163 years ago, Frederick Douglass observed, "The bitterest of the black man's misfortunes is that the fact that he is everywhere regarded and treated as an exception to the principles and maximums which apply to other men. Even those who are sincerely desirous to serve us and to help us out [of our] difficulties stand in doubt of us and fear that we could not stand the application of the rule which they freely apply to all other people." [2] This is what Professor William Ryan calls "Blaming the victim" [3] There are three categories of people who usually become involved in blaming the victim: (1) The first category is comprised of the members of the dominant group. This category uses systematic victimization as a thrust of their ideology to control the dominated and

stay in their position of privilege. (This point will become lucid later on in the paper.) (2) The second category is comprised of those who may sympathize with the oppressed, but still hold the view that the oppressed have some internal problems rather than those problems coming from external to the group. (3) The third group originates from the victimized themselves. Pressured under the influence of the ideology of the oppression and enduring repeated experiences of defeat and the resultant and subsequent hopelessness, they begin to believe that there must be something inherently wrong with themselves.

Questions relative to the Oromo Subordinate Status

Some people ask about the status of Oromos today. Here, too, the group of people raising questions regarding the Oromo's status fall into three categories: members of the dominant (the colonizers) and their supporters, casual observers, and the Oromos themselves.

Category I. Questions from the Colonizer

Following are some questions that one might hear aloud or through insinuation.

1. "All Ethiopians were oppressed under the feudal regime, why should the Oromos make such a fuss about their position in Ethiopia?"
2. "Menelik did not conquer anybody, but he united all, and collaborated with all tribes to build the nation, and protected against the foreign enemies; why should Oromos feel that they were treated differently?"
3. "Where were the Oromos; why did they not speak up for their rights, leaving Eritreans to fight alone?"
4. Why do they make much fuss about their culture, identity, and being called

Oromos (instead of Gallas) as they have-been commonly known in the past (i.e. why did they accept that name in the first place)?”

5. “Oromos were forced to learn the Amharic language, so that they could integrate into Ethiopian society and compete for government and other position in the modern sector.

Why should they make a fuss about the imposition of the Amharic language in schools?”

6. “The Oromos are plainly stupid; why talk about cession (separation) since they are the majority, why don't they, as the majority, stay within Ethiopia and help build the state and benefit from a stronger state?”

Category II – Questions by outsiders

1. “The Oromos are so numerous, and almost all over the country, but have no power (political, economic, cultural). Why can't they do something about it?”

2. “They are so many in the military. Why do they just go to war against their own people while they remain subjugated? Why do they fight to maintain the empire of their masters?”

Category III --- Oromos themselves asking some rather hard questions

1. “What wrong have we done to deserve all these curses - conquests, perpetual subjugation and with all accompanying miseries?”

2. “Why were Oromos from Ras Gobana, the royalist, General Tadesse Birru, the loyal soldier, General Teferi Benti, the decent military bureaucrat, to Haile Fida, the Marxist, (all staunch supporters of the Ethiopian empire) used by their masters and eventually disposed of like, if they were "worn out tires", so to speak?”

3. Is there something wrong with us Oromos? Why do Oromos have such a propensity for betraying our own to the enemy, earning perpetual subjugation for our own race?
4. “Is there something about the Oromo that we cannot look back and learn from past mistakes? Is there something in our "blood system" and guts that makes us succumb to the intrigues of the masters, even when, clearly, doing so will catastrophically undercut the fundamental interests of our own people?”
5. “Why do the OPDO leaders spy on other Oromo political leaders and kill Oromos who do not agree with the political agenda of the Ethiopian Empire?”
6. “Now, the OPDO has taken power in Ethiopia – the prime minister is an Oromo; the defense minister is an Oromo; why are Oromos are under attack again?”

These sets of questions, although generated from three categories of sources, have but one common theme: they raise questions regarding the nature of the Oromo people. Putting it differently, these questions create an atmosphere of blaming Oromos for their past and current crisis, and the subordinate role to which they have fallen.

Blaming the victim: The concept of blaming the victim was developed by Professor William Ryan, an American sociologist, who critiqued Patrick Moynihan’s report regarding the state of the black family in the United States in the 1960s. Briefly, the report by Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who, suggested that the difficult conditions African Americans found themselves in were rooted in their family dynamics. [4] Since then, the concept of blaming the victim has been advanced as a way of explaining the attitude of dominant groups, which attribute the problems found within the oppressed community (ies), as the primary source. [5]

Conceptual Frame of Reference

Dominance

In this work, I borrow the concepts of dominance and subordination from the discipline of sociology. Briefly stated, dominance is the phenomenon that evolves when two or more human groups relate to each other or are bound together on an unequal basis relative to power --- (gender, economic, political, cultural, linguistic, e.g.). [6] For every evolution of dominance in the relationship, two types of parties emerge: (1) The dominant (the oppressor); (2) the subordinate or the dominated (oppressed) group or groups. [7] There are several origins of dominance. Colonial/military conquest is one where the victor establishes his dominance over the conquered. Colonial conquest has historically included the subjugation of nation's far shores and those adjacent to the territories of the aggressor nations. [8]

It is useful at this juncture to note that all dominant groups, with respect to their origins, manifest certain common characteristics in their behavior toward the groups they dominate. However, dominance, which emanates from colonial conquest is multifaceted and much more complex. Thus, in this essay, the terms, dominant, colonizer and oppressor are used interchangeably; also, the terms subordinate, colonized, oppressed will be used interchangeably. According to Fanon's model of analysis, the behavior of dominance which originates from colonial conquest can be viewed from four related and basically intertwined modes: (1) methods of conquest (2) methods of control; (3) ideology of domination; (4) the consequences.

Methods of conquest: The method of conquest is violent, destructive to the natives and their culture. On this issue Fanon wrote: "... the nations that undertake a

colonial war have no concern for the confrontation of cultures. War is a gigantic business and every approach must be governed by this doctrine." [9] On the theme of the cultural slaughter and colonial exploitation he stated: "expropriation, **spoliation**, raids, objective murder" [10] are part of the ultimate plan of domination. With respect to the objectives of conquest, Fanon stated: "The enslavement, in the strictest sense of the native population is the prime necessity." [11] [12] Such a grand venture has two basic intertwined and inseparable motives: economic and the accompanying rewards, and position of privilege, and; psychological motives. [13] Mannoni who studied the French colonial experience in Madagascar revealed another, very important dimension on the motives of the colonialists. He wrote: "The colonial is not looking for profit only; he is greedy for certain other psychological satisfactions and that is much more too dangerous." [14] Such psychological motives are predicated on the notion of the "civilizing mission." [15]

Methods of control: The colonizer controls several vital areas of the colonized society- (1) Economic development; (2) population movement; (3) areas of culture; (4) language and communication. Language is a very important avenue for the development of collective identity and nationalism. It is because the knowledge of such potential, the dominant controls the development of the language of the oppressed nationalities. In the words of Fanon, "Every colonized people, in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is with the culture of the mother country." [16]

Ideology of domination (justification): The dominant group formulates a set of views about themselves in relation to the dominated group(s) and regarding the quality of

dominated population. Such beliefs held by the colonizers portray the dominated (the colonized) in strongly negative lights. This is what Albert Memmi calls, "The mythical portrait of the colonized." The dominated are projected as being lazy, wicked, and frugal, eat too much, brutal. [17]

Adam, another scholar who made a comparative study of dominant- dominated relations (the process of *inferiorization* as he termed the phenomenon) found that the dominated groups were projected to exist on three axioms: (1) they are a problem,"(2) they are all alike and (3) they are all recognizable as such without exception, or behave the same way. When such images were further analyzed in subcategories, the negative projections became much more lucid. They are as follow: they are animals (sub-human); they are hypersexual, heretics, and conspirators, (4) they are everywhere. [18]

Consequences:

The Psychology of Oppression: The concept of psychology of oppression has been developed by scholars to analyze the impact of domination on the psychological wellbeing of the oppressed groups and the system that sustains it. "It is a socio and psychological constructs that integrates psychology and society of the same coin." [19] According to Ratner, psychology of oppression is intended, by the oppressor, to deprive the oppressed the necessary recognition that he/she is a normal social being. The oppressor, with the purpose of imposing his own distorted version of reality on his victim(s) creates a new scheme. Thus, the oppressor "stunts (his) panoply of psychological processes such cognition, perception, emotions, motivations, sensibility, imagination, morals, aesthetics, and self-concept." [20] In addition, Ratner suggests that

the purpose of psychology of oppression is “to adjust the oppressed to social and material oppression and to distort their understanding social reality so that they become blind to its oppressive system character or so that they are incapacitated to reverse it.” Sakiru suggests that the oppressor promotes the psychology of oppression through the institutions, artifacts, and conceptual apparatus he controls: think tanks, advertising, news outlets, entertainment, institutions, university research institutes, religious institutions, political parties and government agencies ([21]

Frantz Fanon, a French psychiatrist, who observed this phenomenon during his medical practice in Algeria [a French colony at the time] documented this social condition for a wider scholarly audience. By all accounts, he is one of the pioneers of this area of study. In the following paragraph, I will cite Fanon’s analysis regarding the psychology of oppression. Fanon asked: "But the men who are a prey to racism, the enslaved, exploited, weakened, social group - how do they behave? What are their defense mechanism? What attitudes do we discover? [22] Just as the dominant group develops certain negative attitudes, negative policies toward the dominated population, this multifaceted domination forces the subordinates to adopt certain distinct attitudes and the resultant behaviors. Fanon's analysis explains the pattern of behaviors under these social and political conditions. He stated: "Thus in an initial phase occupant establishes his domination, massively affirms his superiority. The social group, military and economically subjugated is dehumanized in accordance with a poly-dimensional method." [23] He further explained: "Because no other solution is still left to it, the racialized social group tries to imitate the oppressor and thereby to deracialize itself. The 'inferior race' denies itself as a different race. It shares with the 'superior race' the

convictions, doctrines and other attitudes concerning it." He further added, "Having witnessed the liquidation of its system of reference, the collapse of its cultural patterns, the native can only recognize with the occupant that 'God is not on his side.' The oppressor --- through the inclusive and intimidating character of his authority, manages to impose on the native new ways of seeing, and a pejorative judgment with respect to his original forms of existing." [24]

Albert Memmi who observed the impact of colonization in Tunisia, came to a similar conclusion. He recorded his observation in his widely read book, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. According to his thesis, the colonial group creates a social institution, "...it defines and establishes concrete situations which close in on the colonized, weigh on him until they bend his conduct and leave their marks on his face. Generally speaking, these are situations of inadequacy. The ideological aggression which tends to dehumanize and then deceive the colonized finally corresponds to concrete situations which lead to the same result. To be deceived to some extent already, to endorse the myth and then adopt it, is to be acted upon by it. That myth is furthermore supported by a very solid organization; a government and a judicial system fed and renewed by the colonizers' historic, economic and cultural needs." [25]

The dominated reaction toward language imposition is very serious, since it affects the process of cognition and, consequently, the way they registered reality as created for them by their masters. Thus, language becomes an effective instrument (or a vehicle) which carries the dominated away from his own system of reference. [26]

Secondly, a social and economic reward system becomes predicated on the mastery of that colonial language. The colonized develops a complex attitude to the colonial

language. As Zafar wrote "as a rule it can be said that the relation of the colonized toward the language of colonial domination is ambivalent. He covets and respects it as a means of social climbing, which at the same time hating and dreading it as an instrument of colonial rule." [27]

Internalized Oppression: The concept of *internalized oppression* appropriately falls within the category of psychology of oppression. It is a social phenomenon that occurs when the targeted individual or group(s) accepts the negative views projected on them by the oppressing system. Frantz Fanon, one of the pioneers to the psychology of oppression, observed that the oppressed adopts the doctrines of the oppressors, when overwhelmed by the weight of the oppressive system (see the earlier discussion regarding Fanon's view on this subject on [28] Albert Memmi also observed this phenomenon in his book, where he discussed the "the mythical portrait of the colonizer [29] Paul Freire, the author of the widely read book, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, theorized that the oppressed internalize the perspectives, culture and consciousness of the oppressors as playing "host" to the oppressor [30].

Regarding the subject of the *internalization of the oppressor consciousness*, he wrote the following:

The oppressed suffer from the duality of which has established itself in their innermost being. They discover that without freedom they cannot exist authentically. Yet, although they desire authentic existence, they fear it, They are at one and that the same time themselves and their oppressor, whose consciousness they have internalized.[31].

The same social phenomenon (duality in the soul of the oppressed) has been identified by a distinguished African American scholar, W. E. B. Du Bois, in his seminal work *The Soul of the Negro Folks*. Du Bois wrote the following on the split within the African American consciousness: “One ever feels his two one-ness ...An American, a Negro, two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from torn asunder. [32]

More recently, scholars have undertaken more studies on the concept of *internalized oppression*, and as result we have gained more understanding relative to the subject of internalized oppression. Teeomm Williams [one of more recent scholars relative to this subject] has posited that internalized oppression has three core components or “defining elements” – *process, state, and action*. Williams further explains that *process* is the dynamics through which the oppressed (individual, groups) the internalized oppression is instilled, perpetuated and maintained. According to Williams the *state* refers to the state of being or the characteristics, thoughts, feelings that are consistently displayed by the subordinated group members when internalized oppression and is present and in operation. He further theorized that *action* pertains to outcomes or patterned behaviors that characterize and help to perpetuate both the external dynamics of oppression and its internalized consequences. [33]

The following definition relative to the nature of internalized oppression by Pheterson, demonstrate how the phenomenon of *internalized oppression* manifest itself, showing *internalized oppression* as a *state* and *internalized oppression* as a *process*:

Internalized oppression is the incorporation and acceptance of by individuals by the oppressed group of the prejudice against them within the dominant society.

Internalized oppression is likely to consist of self-hatred, self-concealment, fear of violence and feeling of inferiority, resignation, isolation, powerlessness, and gratefulness for being allowed to survive. *Internalized oppression* is the mechanism within the oppressive system for perpetuating domination not only external control and also building subservice into the minds of groups.”[34].

The definition [as indicated below] by Brown regarding the concept of *internalized oppression* further illustrates the concept of *internalized oppression* as a *process*:

Internalized oppression can be described as the process by which a member of an oppressed or stigmatized group internalizes into her or his core identity and self-concept all or part of the negative stereotypes and expectations held by the culture at larger regarding that group.[35]

Barbara Love’s theorization illustrates when *internalized oppression* can be both a *process* and *action*. On this issue she wrote the following explanation:

The process whereby members of the target group, or the subordinate group, take in emotionally, psychologically, whether consciously, it does not matter, the belief system . . . the sets of rationales that have been created by the dominant group to justify the subordination of the target group . . . its believing the rationale that has been created and then its’s the application of that rationale in both one’s individual relationship with members of one’s own group as well as with members of the dominant group, as well as the application of those ideas in one’s institutional and societal relationships [36]

To conclude this section of this essay, *internalized oppression* is the social phenomenon that evolves as the consequence of an oppressive system where the targeted groups are forced to accept the doctrine of the oppressor, where the former engages in self-destructive behavior. I believe that the concept of *internalized oppression* appropriately explains the consequences of conquest and subjugation of the oppressed nationalities [including the Oromos] in the Ethiopian Empire. Indeed, it is this process that has produced the Oromo *gaultuus* over the last half of the century of the Oromo colonial experience under the successive regimes of the Ethiopian Empire (more will said on this subject later in this essay).

Psychology of Liberation

Psychology of liberation, as a concept, was developed to understand the process used by oppressed groups attempting to emancipate themselves from the social conditions which have been imposed upon themselves as a result of an oppressive social system. This concept was developed while examining dominant v. subordinate interrelations in Latin America. The scholar who pioneered this concept is Ignacio Martin-Baro, a Spanish-born Jesuit priest and social psychologist, who spent his career focusing on dominant vs. subordinate interrelations in Latin America. Briefly, the psychology of liberation entails six basic components: (1) *conscientization* (consciousness raising); (2) realism-**critico** (problems generate their own theories); (3) **de-ideologized** reality (4) a coherently social orientation; (5) the preferential option for the oppressed majorities (the psychology that focuses from the oppressed rather for the oppressed); and (6) methodologically eclecticism (incorporating from diverse domains).

Pioneers of the concept of psychology of liberation rejected traditional psychology, which essentially focused on: (1) value neutrality; (2) assertion of neutrality; and (3) societal irrelevance. [37] Thus, scholars of the psychology of liberation aim to conceptualize an alternative explanation focusing on processes which is “involved in dismantling social inequalities and exclusion, giving voice to the politically and culturally silenced and fusing theory and practice through *conscientized* praxis.”[38]

Another scholar, Doug McAdam, posited that in order to oppose the system of domination, dominated groups have to experience intellectual transformation. According to him, the following steps have to occur in order to achieve the goal of emancipation from the oppressive system: (1) the oppressed has to believe that the system in place is unjust; (2) the oppressed have to believe that they can make a difference (they can challenge the oppressive system); and (3) they have to believe that the oppressive system is vulnerable. [39]

The Oromo Experience Under the *Habesha* Empire

In the following section, I will analyze the Oromo experience under the *Habesha* (the term *Habesha* refers to the collective identity of two main dominant groups- Amharas and Tigreans who ruled the Ethiopian Empire). It is an accepted fact that the Oromos constitute the largest single national entity in the entire region of Northeast Africa, and certainly in the Ethiopian Empire State --- they represent almost a half of the present population in the empire. [40] However, in the words of the editorial page of the Horn of Africa Journal, "...the Oromas numerical strength, cultural cohesiveness and

advanced social structures do not correspond to their subordinate roles within Ethiopian Society." [41]

As indicated previously in this paper, whenever there are subordinate groups, there is also a necessary entity on the opposite end of the axis, the differential variable being power, in favor of the dominant (the oppressor) group. Anthropologist Wolfgang Weissleder's description of the characters this group in Ethiopia is apt.: "The Ethiopian Empire is...in every possible meaning of the phrase, the Empire of the Amhara people. It was founded by them, organized by them, expanded by them, and is now controlled by them, and is now controlled by them in all political and cultural essentials." [42] Of the sole of the empire, its organization, control and whose interest it (the Empire) served, he wrote: "The organization of Amhara State has, with few exceptions, been in the hands of Amhara leadership which employed it in its own interest and in the interest of the Amhara people in general." [43] In regards to the geographical and political dimension of the empire, he concluded: "The Ethiopian empire in its present geographical and political dimension is again an Amhara creation." [44]

The Origin of Habesha Dominance

It is clear that the Amhara dominance has, its origins in colonial conquest. Driven by economic motives (i. e. to cease Oromo wealth, free labor and vast territory for the purpose of building the empire) fueled by similar psychological profits (i. e. the civilizing mission "Aramane Galla") as the then contemporary European colonial powers, the Abyssinia rulers commencing, with King Sahle-Sellassie (1813-1848), pushed forcefully southward thrust. [45] This goal was systematically pursued and further was facilitated

by the European imperial powers' supply of arms, technical advice and close collaboration toward the Abyssinian Colonial (France, UK, Italy, and Russia) endeavors. Emperor Menelik II through his imperial ambition, ruthless military raids and cunning diplomacy, completed the creation of the empire.[46]

Method of Conquest of Oromo: From King Sahle-Sellassie to Emperor Menelik, all Abyssinian imperial founders scrupulously plundered Oromo population and recklessly sacked Oromo culture, in the manners similar to those described by Fanon and others as employed by the European colonizers. [47] Levine, while justifying Amhara dominance in the Ethiopian Empire for its alleged provision of "a minimal basis for national unity" and protection of the conquered nations from European takeover, did admit the distinct “drawbacks” of Amhara dominance. He wrote the following regarding the negative impact the Amahara colonization has made on the conquered nations:

These drawbacks have been those of any imperialism during the great Amhara expansion under Mene1ik II (1889-1913); many peoples were maltreated.

Independent tribesmen were reduced to slavery; unique cultures were decimated; proud kings were dragged in the dust.[48]

The forms of Control of the Oromos: Subsequent to the brutal conquest and subjugation, the extent and the mechanisms employed to control by the Abyssinian colonialists measure up to those used by their European counterparts. The political activities and the movements of the conquered Oromos were administered and controlled by military garrisons (known as Katmas) settled by Amharas [49] These colonial administrative units developed into the towns and cities of modern day. On the economic

front, the Oromos, became the victims of systematic exploitation and deprivation; by and large, they were made landless masses [50] ; every imaginable form of taxation, dues and services (over 20) were imposed upon them. [51] Furthermore, the Oromos were sold as slaves and the Gabbars (semi-slaves) were forced to provide free labor for the rulers of the Ethiopian Empire [52] As a matter of fact, just as the then contemporary European Colonialists extracted wealth for the metropolitan capitalist economy; the Abyssinians used Oromo wealth to sustain the feudal system in the North, and build the empire and interacted with the international, economy.

The Oromo language (Afan Oromo), although the most widely spoken in the Ethiopian Empire and considered very rich by scholars, was systematically kept undeveloped. [53] It was barred for any public use until 1974. As to which script should be adopted for writing and publication (i. e. whether the Abyssinian Geez or Latin alphabets) regarding Afan Oromo, has been the matter of concern for a century by the Amhara rulers. The net effect of this policy is that it deprived the Oromos, among other things, from communicating with each other at the national level.

The Abyssinian Ideology (Justification): Just as the European colonizers developed some certain ideology (justifications) to dominate and exploit the colonized nations, the Abyssinians developed similar ideology and almost identical with that of the former with respect to the rationale for occupation (the civilizing mission), questioning the nature and the quality of the subjugated peoples.

There are at least three major reasons that the Amhara rulers have put forth justifying the colonization of Oromia: (1) to save them from alien control (European

colonizers), (2) to reunify the empire and recover all the supposedly lost Ethiopian frontiers, [54] and (3) to civilize the Oromos and give them law and order.[55]

Just as in the other known cases, the Amhara colonization created two antagonistic societies: the Habasha society (the God select nation) and the "Gallas" (the "Aramene"- pagan) society. Accordingly, the former developed some mythical portrait of the latter. The Abyssinian negative attitude toward the Oromos stems from two inseparable basic pre-occupations of their (Abyssinian) psyche. First, their ethnocentrism was a significant factor. Professor Abir reports that such attitude was already present in the Abyssinian sets of assumptions as far back as the 16th century. He wrote the following on this subject:

Notwithstanding tensions between Tigreans, Amhara and Shawans these peoples, the core of the Solomonic kingdom, proud of their historic-cultural heritage, were strongly 'ethnic conscious'. This found an expression in a 'chosen people' complex, already evident in the myths concerning the origin of the Kingdom.[56]

The Oromos fell at the bottom of the ladder in the Abyssinian mental esteem scale in determining human quality among the nations whom they had encountered. Professor Abir wrote the following on this issue:

Considered uncivilized and inferior, even compared to the plateau's Muslims, the coastal pastoralists, when they succeeded in settling along the eastern escarpments, were kept at arm's length by Ethiopian society. Inevitably, the pagan Galla hordes, with their strange customs and social organization, when they began their great migration to the plateau, seemed even more inferior in the eyes of the semitised Christian elites than the Somalis and Dankalis. [57]

The second Abyssinian pre-occupation is partly related (the result of) to the above described phenomenon --- the intense hatred for the Oromos. With this as the background, the conquest and subsequent colonization occurred, which necessitated psychic aggression against the colonized Oromos. The Habesha mythical portrait of the Oromos is manifested in daily in common Amharic adages. These adages range from simple two-word phrases to more complex poems. For the purpose establishing some general thrusts or themes (i. e. what they are supposed to tell about the Oromos), I collected about a 100 of such Amharic savings. When the group's perception of their central meanings (references regarding the Oromos) the following, "mythical portrait" of the Oromos, as perceived by their colonial masters, emerge: "the Oromos are animal/sub-human, coward/weak, cruel, wild, dirty, incompetent, inferior, illegitimate, lazy, stupid/fool, uncivilized/savage, untrustworthy/conspirators, incapable of change, too many (massive) and a threat." [58]

The Oromo Response to the *Habesha* Dominance

The Oromo reaction to the Habesha colonial conquest and subsequent subjugation ranged from outright confrontation and resistance (in some regions more sustained than others) to frequent rebellions, and finally coming to terms with the cruel inevitability--- the necessity to accommodate subordination. [59]

In the manner conceptualized by Fanon and Memmi, when the Habeshas established their dominance and massively affirmed their superiority, the victimization of the Oromos commenced, and manifested itself in various forms and shades.

The Oromo reaction to colonial condition can be examined under several typologies (classifications), but three such typologies will be sufficient for the current analysis: (a) the response of Oromo leadership;(b) the responses by the peasant class; (c) the literate class of Oromos The Oromo Leadership reaction can be segmented into two categories namely those who had either cultural, religious, linguistic or commercial or some or all the above and those who encountered the invading and expanding Habesha in the battlefields for the first time in their experience. The Oromos of under each of these categories reacted to the victors differently and their reactions were permeated by one factor --- the need to adjust to the condition of defeat and subjugation. The Habesha successfully used two type of warfare, namely, psychological and physical to bend the Oromo will and leading them to eventual acceptance of subjugation. With those Oromo leadership with whom they had cultural and linguistic contacts, they used them against the other Oromos while applying military pressure. Such behavior evolves when the process of internalized oppression becomes in operation. (This point will become clear later in the paper).

The reaction of Oromo peasants: The Oromo peasant class, those who were in charge of Oromo culture and who were not penetrated by the *Hebasha* influence, resisted to the bitter end, the *Habesha* incursion on their territories and homeland. The basic Oromo cultural fabric was intact. These groups were the category of Oromos who had not cultural contacts with the *Habeshas*. They were in charge of the Oromo society. They were governed by the Gadaa (an African egalitarian system of government). They, by in large, practiced Oromo religion (*Qalluu/waqeffanna*, and and **practiced** *Jaarsummaa*

(*araaraa*), the Oromo form of peacemaking were functional. Women's issues were managed by the Oromo *Ateetee* (all female organization). [60] Thus, the Oromia of this category were more equipped by a sense of nationalism and pride of their heritage, and resisted the invasion by Emperor Menelik. The Arsi republic gallant fight in resisting against the invading army of Emperor Menelik, which lasted for about 10 years, represents such experience. The resistance to Menelik's advancing army, the eventual conquest is well documented by the splendid scholarly work of Dr. Abbas Gnamo, in his book, *Conquest and Resistance in the Ethiopian Empire, 1880-1974: The Case of Arsi Oromos*. It informs us about this sustained opposition to the conquest and the eventual conquest. However, in the end, the Arsi resistance was crushed, mainly due to the superior weapons the Menelik had at its disposal – the Arsi fighters had horses and spears only. [61]

By, in large, the Oromo peasants were the category of the Oromo people, which received the harshest treatment [politically and materially], as a result of the conquest and occupation. In most cases, their land was taken away from them and distributed among various the *Habesha* ruling class. In addition, they were forced to pay numerous type taxation. Also, the *Nafxagna* (colonial settlers) system was imposed on them for the purpose of controlling them and exploiting their vital resources. [62] The following is an apt description of the consequences to the conquest and subjugation, as explained to Stigand by an Oromo peasant: “We have become as donkeys and beasts of burden because these Sidamas (Amharas) who have taken our country...” [63]

The Ballabat Institution: The *Habesha* colonial masters recruited some individuals from the peasant class to serve the system of governance. In order to achieve this goal, the colonial system established the *Ballabat* institution. This was the lowest unit in the structure of imperial governance. The main functions of the *Ballabat* were: (1) to collect taxes; (2) to pass order from the city/town rulers to the indigenous population; (3) to keep order in the rural communities; (4) to take individuals to towns to be imprisoned, and (5) to collect bribes for the *Neftena* rulers. In addition, the *Neftenga* rulers incited conflicts between different *Ballabats* so that the latter could sue each other. In the process the rulers collected bribes for their livelihood. The individuals who were recruited to serve as *Ballabats* were mostly illiterate who could not read and write in Amharic, and were unable to match the political skills in the feudal system. Such individuals were abused, despised, and exploited by the rulers of the city/towns. Also, the *Ballabats* were feared, hated, and despised by the Oromo populous. The *Ballabat* system collapsed during the *Dergue* rule and replaced by farmers associations. [64]

The Oromo *galtuu* syndrome: from Ras Goaban Dacce to OPDO

At this juncture, I wish to digress, though briefly, and explain the differences and between a *galtuu* and *gantuu*. In first section of this paper, I described the meaning of the metaphor *galtuu*. *Gantuu* is another metaphor that Oromos use to identify those who betray the cause they are expected to defend. The difference between the characters depicted in these two metaphors is that a *galtuu* seeks dependence on another family just to survive. He is innocent and does not intend to do any harm to the family on which he depends. However, a *gantuu* is a character that runs away from an expected role – he has

the intention of harming the original cause, which is he is expected to defend. The equivalent term that accurately describes the social phenomenon of *gantuu* is *quisling*. Vidkun Quisling (1887-1945), a Norwegian politician who conspired with Nazi Germany for the latter to invade and rule Norway was a classical *gantuu*. However, he did not establish an independent power to rule Norway – instead, he depended on Nazi Germany to bestowed power upon him; thus, he was assigned a nominal position to rule Norway. Here is where the similarities between a *galtuu* and a *gantuu* occur – in both cases the two characters depend on another power for survival and success in pursuing their respective interests. Thus, in my opinion, the overarching characteristics of the two characters is in the fact that both are dependent on a more powerful entity. Later in the paper, I will describe the characteristics of the Oromo modern *galtuus*.

The rise of Ras Gobana Dacce (Ras is a feudal title in Ethiopia): According to available information relative to the background of Ras Gobana (1821 – 1889), his father was an Oromo and his mother was a *Habesaha* woman (mother was from either whether Amhara ethnic stock or Tigray ethnic group). He was a very bright person with significant acumen for military leadership. Also, he was an ambitious person. He was attached to the *Habesha* culture. At the same time, he kept his association with the Oromos of his ancestors. He deployed his diverse heritage to engage in galvanizing some Oromo fighters in his destructive wars against other Oromos, particularly in the South. He was totally committed to serve King Menelik, in the hope, that he (Gobana) would be rewarded for his critical role in assisting Menelik in conquering various nations in the South, including Oromos nation, thus expanding his empire. In the *Habesha* narrative,

Gobana became a sort of a hero who was responsible, in part, for the conquest and expansion of the Ethiopian Empire. His legacy has been promoted (by the *Habesba* intellectual) as something of a model of an Oromo prominent political figure who collaborated with Emperor Menelik and created “unity in Ethiopia.” The *Habesha* narrative promotes him as a model to be emulated and memorialized for generations to come. [65]

On the other hand in Oromos eye, Gobana is the person who caused unimaginable harm to the Oromo nation in participating in genocidal wars against them, under the leadership of Emperor Menelik. He is considered the quintessential quisling. He has been considered the ultimate traitor who has caused the Oromo nation eternal humiliation. Ras Gobana could not imagine the possibility of galvanizing the Oromos, based on the Gadaa form of government, which functioned at the time.

The Gadaa system was not perfected (it was dominated by men), but it was more democratic and more inclusive than the *Habesha* paradigm, which is predicated on vertical relationship with respect to power— you either rule through brutal power or you submit to the rulers out of sheer fear. The *Habesha* paradigm has no concept of parallel relationship. Ras Gobana was the captive of the Habesha frame of reference.

The Oromos of his time disapproved of Gobano’s politics of betrayal as reflected in a folklore narration presented below:

It is strange, it is strange, it is strange,
Women do not raid horses;
She who gives birth to a dog is strange;
Relatives do not hurt each other;

The half of an axe is strange;
People of the same stalk (stock) do not sell each other;
That of the son of Dacce is strange.[66]

Ras Gobano was psychologically dependent on the *Habesha* thought process.
Thus, in my view, he is qualified to be considered the *galtuu* of the highest order.

The social construction of contemporary Oromo *galtuus*: The nature of more recent Oromo *galtuus* is different than the case of Ras Gobana. The more recent *galtuus* are, generally, more educated and better informed regarding the contemporary world system. They are groomed through the modern educational system, which is anchored on the *Habesha* cultural worldview. Modern education can be a source of *internalized oppression*. This phenomenon was observed by Woodson, an African American thinker, regarding the impact of education [in the context of dominant – subordinate relations]. In his widely read book entitled *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, he described the negative impact of the educational system, organized and run by the dominant group. In describing the phenomenon of *internalized oppression*, which occurs as a result of the educational process, he wrote the following:

When you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him not stand here or go yonder. He will find his "proper place" and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go without being told. In fact, if there isn't a back door, he will cut one for his benefit. His education makes it necessary. [67]

By and large, modern education was limited in Ethiopia as a result of isolation and stiff resistance by the feudal system and the Orthodox Church. However, some modest progress was made in terms of introducing modern education during the rule of Emperor Haile Selassie. [68] Still, the curriculum was predicated on the *Habesha* cultural frame of reference. The educational system (from K- 12 and college) was designed to achieve two main goals – to enhance “national unity” which meant the socialization of the students into the *Habesha* cultural frame of reference, and to bring modernity to the imperial system. As discussed in the theory section, language is not a neutral agency. It is a critical vehicle for inculcating social norms. The Amharic language was used as a primary tool for processing the “assimilation” project. By 1960, the Ministry Education formulated a policy which dictated that students from K to 6 should learn all subjects (except English) in Amharic. In addition, Amharic was one of the subjects required for matriculation, necessary for college entrance. It became government policy not to use any other language for instruction [69] For example, Afaan Oromo (Oromo language), which was spoken by the majority people in Ethiopia, was prohibited from public use, including for instructions in the educational system. It was against the law to write in the Oromo language until 1991. Indeed, this was a form of cultural genocide. In addition, the non-Amhara students were pressured to change their names to Amharic names.[70] The political goal of *Amharanization* of the Oromo people is documented in the policy directive issued by the Council of Ministers issued in 1950s. This draconian policy directive stipulated the following measures:

In order to preserve the unity and territorial integrity of Ethiopia: (1) Christianity would have to be expanded, (2) the Amharic language and culture would have to

dominate thorough out of the Ethiopian Empire, (3) a means of quickly and effectively *Amaharanizing* the Galla (the Amhara insolent reference to the Oromos) who constitute more than half of the Ethiopian population would have to be devised before have develop Galla consciousness cause problems. [71]

Stuart Berkeley who served as the President of the Ethiopian Adventist College in Kuyera, Shashamene, recorded a similar observation with respect to the goal of Ethiopian education during that period. In his doctoral dissertation at University of the Pacific, he wrote the following in regards to the preoccupation with the *Amaharization* [through education] project on the part of imperial government:

Fear of divisive influence coupled with the need to unifying forces in the political leaders and government of developing countries to be wary of private schools. It was found out that the most serious divisive circumstance in Ethiopia is cultural diversity. Though education the Ethiopian government is attempting to *Amharanization* these diverse ethnic groups. At the present time Seventh Day Adventist education, especially in culturally different areas, is seen as contributing to the unifying objectives of the Ethiopian government. Ethiopians are generally suspicious of foreign organizations, and the Seventh Day Adventist is carefully watched and controlled by the Ministries of Education and Interior. [72]

Thus, the more recent Oromo *galtuus* are the product of the social construction of the colonial educational system, which demanded strict adherence to the colonial social order. Any slight sign of disagreement with that social order, on the part the colonized, would invite severe punishments, which might include job loss or difficulty finding new

work. More significantly, anyone who shows any sign of challenging the colonial social order would be labelled as a *tribalist* and a *narrow-minded* ethno-nationalist and extremist. In my view, these conditions created the social situation where *internalized oppression* occurred. Thus, the educational system created the self-hating Oromos, who became motivated, so ready to engage in destructive attacks against Oromo vital interests.

Historian Mohammed Hassan, captured the challenges in the imperial social order for educated Oromos, in his analysis of the conditions for Oromos under Amhara rule. He described their predicament as follows:

Distrusted by their Amhara superiors, envied and spied upon by their Amhara subordinates, uncertain of the future, stigmatized as 'uncivilized Galla', some of them were forced to accept Christianity, learn the Amharic language and build churches in their territories. Moreover, because of the necessity of corresponding in Amharic, they were forced to have Amhara secretaries, who despised and spied upon them. The priests also ridiculed and spied on them. The crude national arrogance of the new Amhara settlers was accompanied by an upsurge of old anti-Oromo prejudices. The latter drew nourishment from the Orthodox Church and from a strong sense of vendetta. [73]

The role of the assimilated Oromos in this process has been also described by an astute British historian, Margery Perham. In her book entitled, *Government of Ethiopia* she wrote the following:

In the earlier stages of war against each of the surrounding groups of Gallas, the Amhara kings would, as we saw in the historical chapters, regard them as heathens and enemies fit only for massacre or enslavement.

Soon they would feel the need of using them as subjects or even as soldiers, often against the next Galla tribe; for the Gallas, to their great weakness, were always ready to fight against each other and Gallas such as Fitaurari Habta Giyorgis, finding no racial barrier to their advancement, fought vigorously against their own people. Galla cavalry was especially valuable for civil or for foreign wars. Mene1ik, once the conquests were well established and massacre and enslavement had cowed the Gallas, encouraged the process of assimilation. [74]

It is significant to note that Perham's book was written in 1940s [and the revised version was published in 1969]. Here we are, some eight decades later, educated Oromos still trapped in the same twin system of control – reward and punishment.

OPDO: a new form of *galtuu*: I was personally, taken at back by the news regarding the formation of the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO) in 1989/1990. Indeed, the news surprised and frightened me at the core of my sense of fairness and justice. All my adult life, I spent a lot of my time and energy in promoting and raising consciousness among Oromos regarding their rights, and the need to reclaim their national identity in the face of the colonial oppressive system, which systematically distorted their national identity and denigrated their cultural heritage. My personal journey started when in while I was in grade eight, when I joined the Arsie Basic School Movement (ABSM) in the Rift Valley in Oromia. The ABSM was created by the Arsie Oromo students to spread literacy in the rural areas in the Rift Valley. As time went on,

ABSM became a social movement, which defended the rights of the *gabbars* (semi-slaves) peasants against the absentee land lords. In the process, I learned the severity of the oppressive system against the colonized people in the Rift Valley. [75]

I also gained useful insights regarding the significance of consciousness raising and its impact on the attitude of oppressed peasants. In addition, my experience of involvement in the ABSM enlightened me about the severity of the oppressive system and persuaded me to make a life time commitment – a need to remain engaged in the critical mission of consciousness raising of the Oromo people. I completed my graduate education at Michigan State University in 1981 and moved to Washington, D. C. to embark on the Oromo cause. Between 1982 and 1990, I organized three critical organizations – the Oromo Committee on Immigration & Refugees in 1983, Oromo Studies Association in 1986, and the Oromo Community Organization (1988). [76] I served on the board of the National Forum for Immigration and Refugees (National Forum) – an organization of 120 members. During those years, I worked with different refugee organizations, including the Tigray Relief Society (REST). During that time, the Oromos, Tigreans and Eritreans were on the same page – they all agreed that the *Dergue* had to be defeated and the Amhara supremacy in the Ethiopian Empire had to end. My main contact was Fiseha Asgadon, the leader of the REST, and also assigned to different ambassadorial posts during the TPLF rule. In the process of this work, I had developed positive working relations with some Tigray activities. Thus, I did not expect that TPLF would create an Oromo organization, with a specific purpose of undermining the legitimate Oromo political organization. Thus, the emergence of the OPDO was a big surprise to me. I took it as a hostile act against the Oromo national aspirations. In reaction

to this surprising event, I wrote a paper, entitled, “the OPDO and the Bending the Oromo mind.” I delivered the paper at the Union of Oromos in Europe Conference in Berlin, Germany and at an Oromo gathering in Sweden.

It seems that the TPLF leadership, with the critical support of the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF), became more confident that it would be able to defeat the *Dergue* and rule Ethiopia. With that conviction and confidence, the TPLF proposed to the OLF that the latter to agree to rule Ethiopia as a junior partner. When the OLF leadership declined the proposed political scheme, the TPLF decided to create an alternative organization for its new political maneuver and machinations. [77] Thus, the OPDO was created to serve as its Trojan horse, so to speak. As expected, the *Dergue* command structure collapsed in May of 1991, and the TPLF, supported by the EPLF, entered *Finfinne* with a spectacular military victory. Based on the London Peace Agreement, on July 1-5, the TPLF convened a conference in Addis Ababa, with the purpose of creating a transitional government. Both the OPDO and the OLF representatives attended the conference. [78] In 1992, the internationally promoted regional elections were sabotaged against the OLF by the OPDO, the key TPLF agent (the new *galtuus*). As a result, the OLF withdrew from the TPLF and left the Transitional Government, in protest against the widespread abuses against the supporters of the OLF. Subsequently, the TPLF banned the OLF from operating in Ethiopia legally. [79]

In 1995, the TPLF under the leadership of Meles Zenawi, drafted a new constitution, whereby, a new, ceremonial position of presidency was created and Meles made himself the new prime minister, with enormous power. Dr. Negasso Gidaddaa, an Oromo, was appointed to serve as the new president. What was surprising to me was that

Dr. Negasso was a highly educated person, who was a member of the OLF. The Oromo people both at home and abroad rejected the OPDO – they labeled it as *maxxanne*. In my work [as cited earlier], I defined *maxanne* as “as an object, which does not possess the necessary structural qualities to stand on own its strength; instead, it attaches itself and crawls around, so to speak, a stronger object to accomplish its major functions.” In this context, I further wrote, “metaphorically speaking, in the Oromo worldview, the *maxxanne* designation represented the ultimate form of dependency.” By calling OPDO a *maxxanne*, the Oromos showed the strongest sense of disapproval. [80] To discredit the OLF, the TPLF portrayed the OLF as a new *Kokoo* – a new boogeyman, a caricature (an evil image) designed to frighten the Oromo people.

The rise of Abiy Ahmed as the new prime minister: The TPLF ruled Ethiopia during the following 27 years, conducting fake elections, terrorizing the Oromo people and other ethnic groups who opposed its oppressive rule, and amassing enormous wealth by extracting resources from the South. As time progressed, the TPLF became increasingly hostile toward the Oromo people. In its effort to further marginalize the Oromo people, in 2014 it introduced a draconian policy, called the so Addis Ababa Integrated Master Plan (henceforth referred to as Addis Ababa Plan), a scheme which envisioned the annexation of Oromo territories surrounding the city of Addis Ababa. The news about the new Addis Ababa Plan provoked Oromos of all stripes; the opposition to the new plan was spear-headed by the Oromo *Qeerroos* that forced the TPLF to withdraw the plan in 2016. [81] The multifaceted opposition to the TPLF regime continued unabated, which led to the collapse of the regime when Prime Minister Haile Mariam

Daselegn resigned in February 2018. The OPDO leadership, which came to power as a result of the *Qeerroo* movement, hijacked the *Qeerroo* revolution and ascended to the pinnacle of state power in April 2018. Abiy Ahmed, who claimed to be an Oromo, upon becoming the new prime minister, visited different Oromo regions and gave conciliatory speeches – he promised forgiveness and reconciliation. He created the Reconciliation Commission. He promised free and fair elections. He pledged to introduce [liberal] democracy to Ethiopia. In response to his positive gestures, the Oromos accepted him as their own.

In a sequence of events following, the Oromo fortunes became even more precarious and diminishing considerably, as the new prime minister began to embark on new policies of anti-ethnic identity and ethnic aspirations. He declared that he would restore Ethiopia to its past glory. He promoted Emperor Menelik as a “unifying figure.” In addition, he transformed the Menelik Palace into an elaborate park, named “Unity Park.” [82] Indeed, these were offensive acts to many groups in the South, including the Oromos – the peoples of the South who viewed Menelik as a ruler who conducted genocidal wars against them, took their land and denigrated their culture. Abiy has manifested his hostility toward the Oromo cause by declaring in his speech in Minneapolis on August 2018, that there was no genocide against the Oromo people. He subsequently put Oromia under military command and conducted war against the Oromo freedom fighters in Wollega (western Oromia) and Gujii and Borana (southern Oromia).[83]

In addition, he abolished the federal system unilaterally and unilaterally created the Prosperity Party (PP). Before abolishing OPDO he changed to the ODP (Oromo

Democratic Party (ODP). With that unexpected decision, the ODP became disconnected, totally and permanently, from any shade of claim to have Oromo identity. He reportedly told the Oromos in ODP that they had to follow him and join the PP if they wanted to have any influence regarding the decision making process in his government. [84] Thus, the Oromo political leaders in the former ODP followed him, as demanded, out of fear that they would be marginalized seriously and permanently. Here once again, Oromo politicians [those in the ODP) are trapped in the twin mechanism of control (reward and punishment). More recently, after the assassination of the famous musical artist, Hachalu Hundessa, the prime minister declared war on Oromo political activists, when he appeared on TV, in military fatigues, and declared, “Enna Assayachelen” in Amaharic. The term Enna Assachelen is roughly translated to English as, “We will show it to them.” [85] He has jailed some Oromo political leaders such as Bekele Garba and Jawar Mohammed, of the Oromo Federalist Party and several other, high ranking personalities from the OLF leadership. In addition, he has shut down the internet, undermining people’s ability to obtain information relative to the pandemic virus, which has been spreading like wildfire across the globe. [86]

Psychology of Liberation and the Oromo experience

In the next section, I wish to discuss, though briefly, the psychology of liberation in connection to the Oromo national movement. As discussed in the theory section of this essay, the concept of liberation psychology was developed to analyze the processes and mechanisms oppressed groups deploy in challenging the oppressive system, which has marginalized them politically, economically, and culturally. I argue here that there is clear manifestation of the occurrence of psychology of liberation in Oromo national

movement. I will cite five examples, which demonstrate clearly the positive impact the liberation psychology has had on the Oromo national movement.

Oromos have shown resistance to the *Habesha* rule in various forms since the time of conquest. Since the conquest, no decade has passed without some form of Oromo resistance. However, the quality of Oromo resistance appeared to improve around the 1960s. The first such evidence was seen when the Bale armed struggle against the Haile Selassie government emerged. This movement was the most organized and demonstrated the ability to threaten the military of the Ethiopian government. Waqqoo Guttuu, the leader of the movement made the following statement in his declaration of war against the Haile Selassie regime:

Notice that when the Amharas occupied our country with the help of European imperialism in 1885-1891, many of our people were massacred. Then their survivors were allotted like slaves to the settlers who also partitioned our land amongst themselves. ...Remember that they have plundered and distorted our historical legacy that is widely known, that they have violated our dignity, calling us filthy Galla. Do you realize how many times you have been denied justice in their courts of law? Your muslims, your religion has been denigrated, and do not share equality with Christians.

Innumerable crimes that have not been committed by European colonialism on the African people have been perpetrated upon you. You have been crushed for eighty years now. [87]

The news about the Bale arms struggle spread across Oromia like a wild fire. It re-ignited a sense of hope and pride among the Oromo people. For example, Oromo

folklore dancers in Finfinne acknowledged the cause of the Bale liberation movement in their lyrics, as follows:

Bale dur esbeda amma isani

Manzerin ya akka bishani

Nalle negala kara isani

The approximate translation in English as indicated below:

In the past they were called cowardly

But guns (*Mauser*) started flowing like water

Now we will join them.

Another lyric said the following:

“Jetti bitte

Jarsa Bale fitta

Fallen gabaru didde

Sittu Beeka, Ya Janoy

Kan kanna fidde.

Approximate translation of this lyrics says:

You brought jets,

You killed the old men of Bale (because they would not stop their children)

The youngsters refused to give in

O, Jan Hoy (Haile Selassie), you are responsible

You, who brought these problems.[88]

The Bale armed struggle was able to use sophisticated military equipment to bring down government planes, which were launched to crush the armed movement. Its

military activities spread to three adjacent provinces. The Bale armed struggle lasted for seven years; however, having a profound influence on the Oromo national psyche, it raised consciousness among the Oromo masses. In essence, it became the first Oromo armed force which posed a real threat to the imperial order. In addition, the Bale armed movement was the first that successfully connected to an external power – the leaders of the Bale movement received military assistance from the government of Somalia. Thus, the Bale movement demonstrated to the Oromo people that, the Amahra dominated regime was vulnerable - it re-ignited spirit of Oromo nationalism. Emperor Haile Selassie appointed General Jagama Kello, an Oromo (another *galtuu*), to spear-head the fight against the Bale armed movement and at the same time to negotiate with leaders of the group to address their concerns. As a result of the negotiation, Waqqo Guttuu, the leader of the Bale movement was given the title of General. Also, the Haile Selassie regime threatened Somalia with invasion if Somalia did not stop supporting the Bale armed movement. Thus, eventually, the Bale movement leadership abandoned the armed struggle in 1970. [89]

The second influential Oromo organization that emerged [at about the same time] was the Macca Tulama Association. The significance of this organization was that it was organized by educated Oromos. Indeed, it was the first organization that had a pan-Oromo vision in dealing the marginalization of the Oromo people in the Empire. The organization had two main objectives: “(1) to provide an opportunity for the Oromos in Finfinne to gather and socialize; (2) to provide support development for the rural Oromo communities.” The influence of this new organization spread to rural areas such as Shawa, Arsi, etc. As time progressed, the organization became more influential and more

appealing to the Oromo across the board. The news about the association reached my family in the Rift Valley.

For example, my uncle, Geleto Ulaa (the older brother of my father), summoned me to his home one day, and said: “We have heard the news about an Oromo general who has defected from the Haile Selassie government. I want you to go to Shagar (this another name for Finfinne) and bring back the true story about this matter.” Accordingly, I took the bus to Finfinne (a journey of about eight hours) and attended the meeting of the association. During the meeting, I saw, for the first time in my life, highly educated, well dressed, well fed Oromos. There were several speakers, and all they emphasized that Oromos had the right to organize themselves to help their people. By 1970, the membership spread to eight provinces – soon its membership reached two million. As the newly founded organization appealed to the larger Oromo audience, the leadership of the organization changed its tone and direction, embracing the goal of national liberation.

[90] A letter written by Captain Mamo Mezemire, the military secretary of the Macca Tuluma Association, to the leadership of the Bale movement, illustrates this new direction of the Association. In the letter, the Captain wrote;

The history of humankind shows that the people who rise in the struggle for freedom and independence, in defiance of death, is always victorious. The life and struggle of the oppressed masses in [the] Ethiopia Empire against the Amhara hegemony and their allies headed by [the] American imperialism is sacred liberation struggle of millions oppressed and humiliated people... That struggle surely intensify in course of time, as the oppressed people’s organization means and consciousness become deeply rooted. As you learned in our struggle, the

Macha Tulama democratic movement, which created to raise consciousness of the Oromo people, in the present concrete situation working day and night to put in hand that are within our reach. In fact, the militant members are working now on the means of organizing a nation-wide movement which is based on realizing the aspiration of the people as a whole. Please keep in mind your heroic struggle, defending every inch of the Oromo nation to the last blood or drop of your blood. The decisive war of resistance you are conducting in Bale will, despite of maneuver of imperialism, Zionism and local reactions, be victorious. We shall continue doing everything we can to keep with you. [91]

The rising popularity of the Matcha Tuluma Association among the Oromo people and the nature of the speeches at its meetings, alarmed the Haile Selassie government; it used the explosion at a cinema in Finfinne, as a pretext to arrest the leadership and subsequently banned the organization. Some of the leaders of the organization were executed (for example, Haile Mariam Gamada, the founder, Captain Mamo Mamezemire). General Tadesse Biru, a prominent member of the Association, was imprisoned for ten years, after a fraudulent trial. The emergence of the Matcha Tuluma Association was a significant political event in the Oromo national movement for several reasons: (1) it was the first pan-Oromo political organization since the conquest, which was completed during early 20th century; (2) it was the first time educated Oromos associated themselves with Oromo history, culture, and aspirations; and (3) it signaled, in a fundamental way, that the assimilation project, as conceived and imposed on the Oromo people by the previous successive Habesha regimes, had failed.

In 1974, four years later after the Bale armed struggle movement was defeated and the Matcha Tuluma Association was banned, a new national political organization was born – the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). The new political organization was based on the remnants of the Bale movement and the Matcha Tulama Association.[92] In its political objective document, by the founders of the new organization stated the following:

The fundamental objective of the struggle is the realization of national self-determination for the Oromo people and their liberation from the oppression and exploitation in all forms. This can be only realized through the successful consummation of the new democratic revolution by waging anti-feudal, anti-colonial, and anti-imperialist struggle, and by the establishment of the peoples' democratic republic of Oromia. [93]

As a way of demonstrating the rejection of the assimilation scheme, as constructed by the Haile Selassie regime, the founders of the OLF sent a signal to those Oromos who were assimilated to the *Habesha* social system; thus, the document declared the following:

The term *neo-Gobananists* (Gobana is equivalent to Quisling in Oromo history) refers to those Oromos who are devoid of self-confidence to organize themselves and who remain under tutelage of the colonial regime or other chauvinistic political organizations. Thus, they falsely implying that the interest of the Oromo nation is represented. [94]

Upon its formation, the OLF received overwhelming support from the Oromo populous and it emerged to become a symbol of Oromo nationalism. When the OLF went

back to Oromia in 1991, as a member of the governing coalition with the TPLF as the head of that coalition, there was a popular demand, on the part of the Oromo populous, for the OLF leadership to pursue armed struggle for independence. However, the freedom for the OLF to continue working with Oromo people [directly] came to an end, when the TPLF declared the OLF as a terrorist organization and expelled it from the empire – then the OPDO, the new *galtuu* become the main agent (the trojan horse) to dominate and control the Oromo people. [95]

The significance of the OLF in the Oromo national movement is not in the realm of military successes, for it never even captured a town or a city. Unlike other liberation fronts in the region at the time, such as EPLF and TPLF, which had support from the neighboring states, such as Sudan, and being closer to the Red Sea, which made it much easier to obtain weapons from the outside, the OLF had to depend on the local resources. Such local resources, as desirable as they may be, were not so effective in waging war against the mighty army of the empire. However, the OLF successes were in the realm of ideology, educational policies and the restoration of Oromo culture. Among the most successful new tradition created by the OLF was the introduction of using *Qubbe* (a modified Latin script) in teaching the Oromo language. Also, the TPLF, as a way of undermining OLF influence among the Oromo people, it (TPLF) implemented some of policies the OLF had advocated for. For example, Oromia, the Oromo territory, received legal designation from the government. In Oromia, the Oromo language received legal designation from the TPLF led government. In addition, the Oromo language has been incorporated into the curriculum throughout the empire.

The rise of *Waldia Jaarsa Biyaa Oromiyaa*: One of the most significant events in Oromia during the brief period of relative freedom in Ethiopia, was the rise of Oromo elders [in1991/92]. They rose from the ashes of the *Dergue*, after a century of separation, in part due to the mechanism of control by the colonial Empire, and they formed the *Walddayaa Jaarsaa Biyaa Oromia* (The National Association of Oromo Elders). The representatives to *Jaarsaa Biyaa Oromia* (two elders selected from each district) were selected from Wollo to Borana, from Wollega to Harar, and from Illu Babor to the Somalia border. In analysis of this new grass roots organization, I wrote the following:

This act itself was a clear demonstration of the Oromo national resilience, for they - - - embraced each other, irrespective of diversity of region, class and idiosyncrasies at sub-group level which had been evolved as a result of a century of separation. One of the main objectives of this organization was to ensure that the Oromo political leaders would not cause conflict among the Oromo people by using regional and religious affiliations. [96]

In addition, the Oromo Elders Association supported the OLF and the elders favored the independence of Oromia. For example, in one meeting which took place in Neqement, Wollega, the new association urged the OLF to pursue armed struggle for the liberation of Oromia. However, unfortunately, the TPLF led government crushed this genuine grass roots based movement, banned the new Elders Association, and imprisoned some of the leaders of the association while some went into to exile.[97]

The emergence of the *Qeerroo and Qarree Movement*: In my view, the most significant development in Oromo national movement is the emergence of the *Qeerro*

and Qarree (terms used for unmarried young people suggesting that the movement includes *men and women*) movement between 2014 and 2018. The term *qeerroo* means [brave] bachelors. The group is comprised of the *Qubee* generation (those young people studied in Oromo language and did not speak Amharic). The *Qeerroo* movement started in opposition to the Addis Ababa Master Plan. The group coordinated its efforts across Oromia, which overcame the religious/regional divide. Its activities included protests, blocking roads from *Finfinne* to other regions, attacking the government targets, and attacking homes and properties of the OPDO members. The government, on its part, attempted to squash the movement by jailing and killing the Oromo young people. In addition, the TPLF led government ran hostile propaganda against the *Qeerroo* movement, labelling the *Qeerroos* as OLF lackeys and terrorists. The group's protesting efforts received support from all Oromos of different stripes. The *Qeerroos* were fierce and fearless. The group's activities disrupted transportation and paralyzed the economy in the empire. Most (significant) members of the OPDO supported the activities of the *Qeerroo* movement. The opposition to the Addis Ababa Master Plan created a hostile political environment for the TPLF. Prime Minister Hailemariam Daselgen resigned, suggesting the country needed a person who is better suited to bring peace and reconciliation. [98] Also, there was a concern that the conflict may lead to the disintegration of the empire. According some sources, the U. S. government, the TPLF *ex-dues machima*, suggested that the next prime minister should be an Oromo. It was under such circumstance that Abiy Ahmed became the new prime minister.

Thus, we can argue that there has been an intellectual transformation, as a result of psychology of liberation, in the Oromo national movement (more will be said later regarding this point).

Summary and Conclusion

In this essay, I have discussed the phenomenon of Oromo *Galtuus* syndrome from Ras Gobana to the OPDO. In the paper, I commenced my analysis by highlighting the perennial questions raised regarding the qualities (attributes) of the Oromo people for their subordinate status in Ethiopia. In analyzing the social phenomenon, regarding Oromo *galtuus*, I have used two theoretical constructs – concept of dominance and its negative impact on the dominated from the discipline of sociology and the concept of psychology of oppression from the discipline of psychology regarding the Oromo national experience under the *Habesha* colonial system. In addition, I used the concept of psychology of liberation to explain the nature of the Oromo national movement for liberation, which commenced in the 1960s. In the paper, I have discussed five distinct cases where the Oromo people ushered in a new phase for national liberation; I argue such concerted efforts take place only when the oppressed population revolt against unjust and oppressive systems. This type of action occurs when there is an intellectual transformation on the part of the oppressed.

In my view, the formation of the OPDO was a variant – it was a throwback, as it were. It was an attack on the Oromo national aspirations. As indicated in the essay, OPDO was specifically created to undermine the influence of the OLF among the Oromo

populous. Its [OPDO] influence arrested the progress in the Oromo national movement, which had been made during the previous four decades.

The OPDO, as a new *galtuu*, is more sophisticated and more harmful to the Oromo national cause. Its leaders presented themselves as Oromo nationalist, but only in the context of serving the TPLF political scheme and the survival of the Ethiopian empire. The OPDO leaders conducted war against Oromo liberation fighters in Wollega and Gujii and Borana. It hijacked the *Qeeroo* revolution. Now, its chief [of OPDO], Abiy Ahmed, has dismantled its (OPDO) very existence. Its leaders and supporters can no longer claim to stand for the Oromo people. Also, since coming to power, Abiy has instructed the ODP members to follow him in joining the Prosperity Party, if they want to have any influence in his government. Thus, the twin mechanism of control (reward and punishment) has become operational, once again, in controlling and subjugating the Oromo people.

During the post TPLF period, the Oromos emerged as the real losers. During its rule, the TPLF developed Tigray militarily, economically and technologically. At the present time, for all intents and purposes, Tigray is almost an independent state. For example, the TPLF has promised to conduct elections in its jurisdictions against the policy of Prime Minister Abiy who postponed the elections. Some of the TPLF leaders who have committed heinous crimes against other groups during the TPLF, are currently hiding in Tigray. Abiy is not able to force the TPLF to bring these criminals to justice. The Amharas are also came out in a better shape. They were well armed during TPLF rule – the TPLF government allowed them to arm themselves, with the clear purpose of using them against the Oromo majority. At the present time, the Abiy government is not

able to invade against the Tigray region, even if he wants to – they are too powerful. In contrast, the Oromo country has been exposed to attacks by the PP and Abiy government, for the cause of preventing the Ethiopian empire from eventual disintegration. The OPDO did not arm the Oromos. In fact, it prevented them from arming themselves, per the TPLF negative policy toward the Oromo people. Thus, the Oromos found themselves outmaneuvered, traumatized, confused, and disabled to deal with the new political dynamics during the post TPLF period.

Thus, in my view, the OPDO leadership suffers as a result of *internalized oppression*. The educational system, which groomed them, is predicated on mind control, where they have to think and commit themselves to ideology of sustaining the Ethiopian Empire, while launching wars against their own people.

The social construction of the Oromo *galtuu* in the Ethiopian Empire:

Past and Present

Part II

The challenges to the Oromo national movement in the 21st century

Introduction: While there is high level of consciousness among the Oromo populous, at the present time, the *internalized oppression* phenomenon still persists, as manifested in the political behavior of the Oromo *galtuu*. In my view, having such a high level of consciousness alone will not mitigate the harm caused by the Oromo *galtuu* syndrome. Indeed, if this consciousness is not channeled to more concrete and positive activities, it could lead to frustration, disappointment and even dissolutions. There are

other serious challenges, which are confronting the Oromo society on its journey for national liberation, and in my view, if these challenges are not addressed properly, the Oromo *galtuu* syndrome will prevail. In the following paragraphs, I will identity eight main challenges with respect to the current situation in the Oromo national movement.

(1) Issues pertaining to leadership: While the current level of national consciousness is very high, it is very critical that some form of unified and credible leadership be present in the political arena. Equally important is the need to have a credible political organization. Also, it is important to have movements which can advocate for the rights of the oppressed with clear goal(s). Appropriate leadership can channel the high hopes and expectations generated by such a high level of national consciousness by the populous, to positive and constructive actions. Sadly, in all these areas, there is currently a deficiency in Oromo society.

(2) Current trends of intercommunal violence: There is an emerging problem as result of present-day intercommunal violence. In this new social phenomenon, the regime of Abiy has taken sides – it is clearly supporting groups which oppose any form of federalism. The main group that has been advocating for taking Ethiopia back to a model of Emperor Haile, where there will be one “national” language, one culture, one dominant political system, controlled from the top, are the Amhara political activists and intellectuals. Indeed, it is significant to note that the Amhara politicians and intellectuals have never acknowledged the genocidal wars by Emperor Menelik against the nations of the South, including the Oromo nation. Neither have they shown any understanding and

sympathy regarding the humiliation, exploitation, the resultant frustration, anger and deep sense of resentment, manifested by the Oromo people throughout the history of their subjugation.

(3) Perennial conflicts within the *Habesha* core: The persistent struggle for dominance over the ruling of the empire between the two main groups of the Abyssinian core – Amhras and Tigreans – has squeezed [in their struggle for dominance] and seriously marginalized the Oromos for over a century. Thus, currently there are two versions of Ethiopia on display. There is the Amhara version, which insists on envisioning Ethiopia as ruled by its [Amhara] model; the Amhara model envisions and insists that the Empire state should control from the top (by the Amhara elite). In contrast, the Tigrean version is that the one manifested during the 27 years of TPLF rule. This version proposes that the empire should be sustained at any cost, while providing some room for self- governance which should be allowed in the Tigrean terms. In my view, the OPDO was created to support the Tigrean model of governance [as described here].[99]

(4) Ethiopia as a dependent colonial state: Bonnie Holcomb and Sisay Ibsa define a dependent colony as “the system of assisted occupation which extended the objective of monopoly colonial control through countries who become partners in the process is termed dependent colonialism.” [100] The authors further expanded their thesis relative to the nature of dependent colonial state noting, “[T]he dependent colonies were empowered by larger powerful nations. The expansion of dependents made it possible by

holding and subjugating and exploiting other nations as colonies, to extend the superstructure of a capitalist state into new territories.” [101] These authors identify South Africa under Apartheid, Belgium colonialism in Africa (at the of the writing the said book), and Abyssinia, as dependent colonial states. The astute observation by the British diplomat, Earl(y) Lytton, the author of *Stolen Desert*, is relevant here. Observing the support Emperor Menelik received from European imperial powers in conquering the South, he wrote the following:

Menelik seems to have operated with French technicians, French mapmakers, French advice in the management of standing army and more French advice as to holding the captured provinces with permanent garrisons on conscripted colonial troops. The French also armed its troops with fire arms and did much else to organize its campaigns. ...the Gallas (Oromos) were thus conquered by the Habesha for the first time in recorded history. Without massive support of European help the Gallas would not been conquered at all. [102]

Professor John Spencer who advised Emperor Haile Selassie for 43 years, observed the perpetual (since the 16th century) Ethiopian dependence on external *dei ex machina* for its very survival. He wrote the following analysis:

Ethiopia’s supreme crises were of external origin and were often resolved by foreign *dei ex machinas*. The 16th century invasion led by the Somali Gagn were repelled by the Portuguese. The defeat of Italy at Adwa at the end of the 19th century achieved in part with French and German arms. The Emperor’s own rise to power in the early years of the 20th century was achieved to a significant degree thorough the intervention of European states opposed to the reign of Emperor

Menelik's successor Lij Eyassu. Haile Selassie fell from power support of Fascist Italy's invasion and went to exile in England where he was kept on hand for possible utilization against Italy. It was the British who got him back on the throne and the United States that furnished the occasion of for his downfall.

Like Britain and Portugal before it, the Soviet Union became the third dues ex machine. It has spent more than two billion dollars military aid to counter Somali and Eritrean attacks on the highland of Ethiopia so, in the end, to convert her into a Soviet colony.[103]

The relevance of this discussions lies in the fact that the sponsors of the dependent colonial state such as Ethiopia, are not accountable to the oppressed people in such states. For example, the colonized people in the Ethiopian Empire do not have access to the US political process, [which has sponsored financially and diplomatically during the Haile Selassie regime and the TPLF led government], and at the present time, the U.S is sponsoring the Abiy regime. In my view, Oromo efforts need to overcome this problem (i. e. there should be effective efforts to expose the harms done to the oppressed in the Ethiopian Empire). Thus, far the efforts by Oromos leadership to overcome this serious problem have not been effective. Thus, I argue that this problem has to be addressed in a rational and strategic manner.

5. The need to deal with the raging intra-group conflicts within the Oromo society: Currently, there are three main sources of conflict in the political arena in Oromo society. The first source of conflict emanates from the new Oromo *galtuus* – the OPDO leaders and its followers. As indicated earlier in this paper, this group has joined the

Prosperity (PP). It is clearly apparent that Abiy created the PP with the aim of suppressing the identities of other nationalities in the Ethiopian Empire. In particular, it is very clear that he views the aspirations of the Oromo society for self-determination as a major threat to his vision of “restoring to its past glory.” Thus, he put his goal to disintegrate the Oromo society so seriously as to inflict damage and permanently disable the Oromo national movement. It seems that in order to achieve this goal, he has unleashed serious attacks and repressions against the Oromo nationalists from various angles. It is in this context that the former OPDO members are serving as the essential tools in attacking the Oromo political leaders and activists.

The second source of conflict has been rising from the competitive relationship between various Oromo organizations. For example, the Oromo Federalist Party (OFP) was created, in large measure, in response to the destructive conflict within the OLF. Also, the founders of the OFP party felt that there was no registered Oromo political organization in Ethiopia, able to defend the Oromos in the TPLF led parliament. In my view, what is required in the face of recent events (the prospect of disintegrating the Oromo society) is a united front, clearly focusing on the liberation of the Oromo nation from colonial bondage. Further, I argue that the dream of democratizing Ethiopia must come to the end – democratizing a collapsing empire is an impossible mission. I will further argue that all Oromos have to confront the cruel reality that the *Habesha* ideology of dominance is insurmountable within the imperial system. It is very clear that the efforts to democratize Ethiopia since the 1960s have failed miserably.

The third source of conflict is the destructive relations within Oromo political organizations. The most serious conflict erupted in public view within the OLF

leadership in 2001. Essentially, the conflict was generated as a result of a power struggle between the former general secretary and deputy general secretary. I organized the *Shaanachaa*, (peacemaking of five persons) at the recommendation of some leaders within the OLF and the OLF members. The *Shaanachaa* received overwhelming support from the Oromo populous and worked feverishly for three years in its efforts to create common understanding between the two parties. The *Shaanachaa* wrote its peace proposal based on the OLF by-laws. The OLF Executive Committee (also known as Shane) also, and was also approved by the Central Committee (by a unanimous vote), accepted the *Shaanachaa* peace proposal, while the *Camaa Cuumsaa* (Transitional Authority) wing declined to accept the peace proposal. Subsequently, the *Camaa Cuumsaa* leadership disintegrated. [104] Also, a new level of conflicts emerged within the so-called Shane group and eventually the entire OLF leadership disintegrated. As a result of these destructive conflicts within the organization, the OLF leadership went back to the empire in 2018 splintered, seriously disabled, and with empty hands. It is, indeed, very surreal that some of the former OLF members and supporters, have been recruited by the Abiy political machinery to destroy both the OFC and the OLF.

As suggested previously in this work, there is a very high level of consciousness among the Oromos at the present time. However, such popular sentiment must be led by a credible and able political leadership that can generate hope and confidence in the movement, and channel such sentiments to constructive and productive activities, in order to succeed. In my view, in order to achieve this goal, the Oromo society has to grapple with these internal conflicts. In particular, the Oromo society has to deal with the Oromo *galltu* syndrome and prevent the resultant damage of the political scheme by this

group. One potential source of rejuvenation in the Oromo national movement may be the involvement of younger generation of Oromos in the national struggle.

6. The application of the *Ullee* doctrine: The term *ullee* is stick or rod in Oromo language. Oromo farmers and cattle herders use *ullee* to guide their cattle. Also, it is used to protect oneself from any form of attack by any adversary. Thus, an *ullee* is an essential tool for a successful function of cattle herders' daily life. After observing a pattern of divisive politics in the Oromo national movement, which involved using (as it were, the targeted group as a sort of *ullee*) against one category of Oromos for some political benefits, I developed the concept of the *ullee* doctrine in 1993. [105] In my view, the application of the *ullee* doctrine has become somewhat the new norm in more recent Oromo politics. This practice has caused enormous harm – it has caused suspicion, division, mistrust, and confusion within the Oromo national movement.

The classic example of the application of the *ullee* doctrine took place during the conflict within the OLF leadership, when the divided leadership used the OLF fighters in the Borana territory against each other, resulting in the killing of several fighters. The Shane wing won in that violent interaction; however, several fighters on the *Camaa Cuumsaa* wing who lost in the battle, surrounded the TPLF regime, with some significant amount of ammunition. The violent confrontation between the two sides occurred against the plea expressed by the Oromo elders in the region who intuitively understood the gravity of the situation. After the two wings declined to accept their peace proposal - the elders held peace discussion for 30 days. To reconcile the differences between the two sides, the elders pleaded with the leadership not to spill blood on the Borana soil.

Unfortunately, the two antagonistic wings did not respect the elders' plea and indeed, the violent confrontation did spill blood on Borana soil. This negative episode led to the loss of support from the Borana community in Kenya.[106]

The application of the *ullle* doctrine is contrary to the Oromo ethos. The Oromo ethos implores its members to love, respect, and embrace each other. The Oromos as a collectivist society, spend an ordinate amount of time and energy resolving internal conflicts to avoid any form of hostility and division. [107] It is my personal observation that the application of the *ullee* doctrine came into practice as a result of the emergence of elite politics in the Oromo national movement. In my view, it is essential that the Oromo political actors must recognize this type of practice and avoid being trapped in this form of divisive and harmful politics.

7. The Oromo ethos vs. the Habesha feudal paradigm: By any measure, the Oromo society is an indigenous population, which is characterized as having a collectivist worldview. In a collectivist society, the leaders of a community spend a significant amount of energy and time on the needs of various elements in the society to reconcile differences so that peace, reconciliation and harmony can be achieved. The use of power to dominate others is discouraged and avoided. Such a society invests in building trust and respect within the community. The Oromos extend similar treatments to outsiders if they receive positive gestures from them. Even if they conquer some groups, the Oromos make them members of their family and community through the ***Gudifacha* process (adoption).** [108]

However, the Habesha culture is an individualistic society; its worldview is predicated on supremacy through manipulation, conquest and domination. More significantly, it is heavily influenced by a feudal worldview. The Habesha culture instructs its members not to trust anyone. This theme in the Habesha culture is manifested in the common sayings in the Amharic language. Here I will cite a few adages in the Amharic language which demonstrate this thesis. *Sawun wodad ingi, ateminow* (the rough translation is: you may love a person, but you should not trust him). Another adage is: *kagent bali* (of speaking) (the rough translation of this saying in English: one should speak above the neck, meaning, do not speak to someone from your heart; you should not reveal your intentions). Another adage is *Somena Work* (rough translation in English – gold and wax). The basic philosophy advanced in this adage is that wax suggests the pretense, while gold represents the real story [109]

The relevance of this discussion lies in the fact when the Oromos and the *Habeshas* interact with these two diametrically opposing worldviews, the relationships between the two communities become problematic. As a result of such opposing worldviews, the Oromos are usually outmaneuvered, outsmarted and end up being the victims as a result in such interactions. In my view, this reflects the interaction between Oromo political leaders and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed since he assumed the state power: Oromos trusted his rhetoric of love, peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation, and opened up their hurts to him. To the deep regret of the Oromo people, Abiy Ahmed initiated some draconian policies – even worse than the very harsh TP: LF policies, which it used during its turbulent rule – against the Oromo people. How can we explain, Abiy, who assumed

state power on the back of Oromo *Qeerros* revolution, and hijacked the magnificent grass revolution and subsequently declared war against the Oromo nation?

8. The need to do critical homework: The recent major Oromo political activities have revealed some serious deficiencies regarding performance. Such political activities reveal lack of preparedness on the part of the Oromo people to meet the demands of the time. In this context, I wish to cite three major events leading to the present situation where the lack of preparedness contributed to disastrous results for the Oromo side. The first example is when the OLF leadership failed (refused) to open its office in Washington, D, C., the seat of global power, during the 1980s and 1990s,. In contrast, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Tigrean People's Liberation Front (TPLF) took over the political activities of their respective student organizations and opened their organizational offices in Washington, D.C. and lobbied the American government for their respective causes. When some Oromo activists lobbied the OLF leadership to open its office in Washington, D. C., the response was, "*Nuu Qottee Bulla Wajiin Hojjaana*" (this means," are working with the peasants"). The subtext of the above cited statement was "do not bother us with this issue." However, at the London Peace Conference in May 1991, when the OLF leaders asked for the U.S government to support OLF's political goal for self-determination, Mr. Herman Cohen, the Chairman of the conference, reportedly told them, that the US government did not know the OLF and it (the U. S.) has no information regarding the Oromo national cause; thus, the OLF's failure to open its office in Washington, D. C. and educate the American

government regarding the Oromo cause resulted in the OLF attending the London Peace Conference empty handed, so to speak.[110]

The second episode illustrating this point, is the events which took place in 1991/92, when the OLF leadership went back to Ethiopia. The OLF was welcomed with open hugs and arms by the Oromo populous. There were many political rallies in so many places. However, as the ensued events illustrated, the OLF leadership failed to do the necessary homework regarding the real intention of the TPLF relative to the Oromo issue and the cause of democracy in the post *Dergue* Ethiopia. In the end, the OLF was outmaneuvered, out smarted, and eventually kicked out of Ethiopia – as if it (OLF leaders) were an unwanted dog - being labeled as a terrorist organization. Subsequently, Meles Zenawi, the leader of the TPLF, declared a war against the OLF and, by extension against Oromo people. [111]

The third episode took place when Abiy Ahmed took the state power in 2018. The leaders of various Oromo organizations embraced him as one of their own; however, as soon as he consolidated his power, he embarked on a political program to eliminate those Oromo organizations and their leaders from the political arena in Ethiopia.

As discussed in all these three cases, there is clear evidence that the Oromo political leadership failed to do the hard work homework required prior to engagement. In order to succeed in this complex world, reacting to events from gut feelings and emotional reactions will not do the job.

Conclusion

In Part II, I have suggested that, while the level of Oromo national consciousness is very high – perhaps the highest ever, I have also argued that having such high level of national consciousness [alone] is not enough to lead to national liberation. In this context, I have identified [and discussed] eight specific areas, which will require special attention. As discussed in the theory section of this essay, the most significant factor associated with group dominance is power. Power is the ability to control events in one's interest [at expense of the opposing party] in conflict interactions. In order for a party to deploy power in a conflict interactions, a party must have access to resources, be willing to use the available resources, and also must have skills to use the relevant resources. [112] In my view, the deployment of Oromo *galtuus* against the fundamental interests of the Oromo nation is the function of power. The successive *Habesha* regimes used the assets (financial aid, military skills, diplomatic supports, etc.) from the West to conquer and control the Oromo people in the empire state. By acquiring these resources and utilizing them effectively, these regimes have been able to recruit and rewarded the Oromo *galtuus* against the vital interests of the Oromo people. Equally significant is the fact that they [the *Habesha* regimes] were able to punish those Oromos who have opposed the perennial oppressive system. [113]

To state the obvious, the Oromos need to harness and mobilize their resources to counter the Oromo *galtuu* phenomenon. In my view, successfully addressing the eight issues [as discussed in the forgoing paragraphs] will be a place to start. [114]

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- (19) See F. Fanon. *Black Skin, White Masks*, op. cit. p. 18
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59. M. Abir. (1980). *Ethiopia and the Red Sea* (London: Frank Cass. P. 144.
60. Ibid. p. 145.
61. I collected the 100 sayings in Amhara, which reflects the Habesha negative view of the Oromo people. I hope to organize these sayings and publish them in the future.
62. Abbas Gnamo (2014). *Conquest and resistance in the Ethiopian Empire: The case of Arsi Oromos*. Boston: Brill Press.
63. Ibid.
64. [52] M. Hassan, “The Oroma Nation Under Amhara Colonial Administration...” op:cit.p. 18.
65. C. H. Stigard. (1940). *To Abyssinian through Unknown Land*. Philadelphia, p. 226.
66. I grew up in the 1950s and 1960s when the *Ballabat* system was still in operation; 67. thus, I have had direct experience regarding this form of control.
67. Cater G. Woodson. (2000). *The Mis-Education of the Negro*. Chicago, Ill: African American Images Press, p. xix.
68. See Teshome Wagaw. (1979), *Education in Ethiopia: Retrospect and Prospect*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
69. See Christine McNab. (1989). *Language Policy and Language Practice: Implementation Dilemma in Ethiopian Education*. Stockholm: University of Stockholm, pp. 51-88; Mordechai Abir. (1970). Education and national unity and national unity in Ethiopia, foreign, vo. 69, no. 274, *Foreign Affairs*, pp. 44-59.
70. I have direct experience relative to the pressure the non-Amhara students encountered in schools at the time. For example, my teacher [his name was Abebe Gebre-Kidian] wanted to change my name when I was in grade 5. Briefly, he said in matths class, “Hamdesa, we need to change your name. I asked him why? He said, “your name Simhi simet Aystem (your name does not make sense. I asked him, what name he was proposing? He said,’ Amde-Sa (this meant my pillar in Amharic). I said, “You cannot change the name my parents gave me.” I left the class room, crying. He never raised the issue again.
71. As in Dimitsh Hafash, by-weekly Newsletter of the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front, August 15, 1980, Vol. No. 10, p. 1.

72. Stuart Berkeley (1966).. Selected Factors, which influence church related education in developing countries. Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Pacific, p281.
73. Mohammed Hassan, The Oromo national under Amhara administration, op: cit.
74. Margery Perham, (1940). ?*The Government of Ethiopia* (Evanston, Ill.,: Northwestern University Press, 1969), p. 300. See also H. Blackhurst, “Ethnicity in Southern Ethiopia: The General and the Particular” *Africa* (London), p. 50 (1980).
75. My experience with ABMS – I went out to teach after completing grade nine. I was very young and did not much experience in real life. I had 150 students (male and female). The stories I heard from my students and some leaders in that community had a major impressions in my life journey.
76. Between 1982 and 1983, I developed strategic plan regarding the activities the Oromos should focus on in the diaspora. See OSA Report 1993, pp. 8-13.
77. See Hamdesa Tusso, The Demise of the Mythical Ethiopia. *Oromo Commentary*.Nos, 2 and 3, 1991. Po. 2023.
78. See Sara Vaughan. 2003). Ethnicity and Power sharing in Ethiopia. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, Ph. D. Thesis.
79. See The history of the OLF Britinamica .com. accessed August 19, 2020; Gadaa. Com, The birth of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), accessed August 19, 2020; Marin Plaut, The OLF, *The Review of African Political Economy* Vol, 33, pp. 587-593. Hamdesa Tusso, The Tears of Generations. In Seym Hameso and Mohammed Hassan (eds). *Development Arrested in Ethiopia*. Op: cit. pp. 15-23.
80. Ibid
81. Tom Gardner .2018). ‘Freedom!’ the mysterious movement that brought Ethiopia to Standstill. *The Guardian*. Tuesday, March 13, 2018; Marqaux and olionaudh Raleigh, Data Analysis: The roots of popular mobilization. *IPI: Global Observatory*, June 2017; Mosisa Aga (2020). Qeerro: A regimented organization or spontaneous movement? Ayyaantuu, August 21.
82. See Hamdesa Tusso (2020). Peace and Reconciliation: The Essential Pre-Conditions Implication for the Current situation in Ethiopia, June 2020 (This paper can be accessed from my website, www.hamdesa.com).
83. Ibid.
84. Goitom Gereluel (.2019). Ethiopia’s prime minister wants the ruling coalition. Who is getting left out? December 23, 2019.

85. Dave Lawler, Ethiopia's Nobel Peace Laureate Cracks down on ethnic violence, Axios, July 6, 2020.
86. Cara Anna, Ethiopia enters third week of internet shut down after unrest, Associate Press, July 14, 2020; HRW, Ethiopia's communication shutdown takes heavy toll. March 9, 2020.
87. Gebru Tareke (1991): *Ethiopia: Power and Protest and Peasant Revolt in Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 131.
88. As in Bonie Holcomb and Sisay Ibsa,. (1990). *The Invention of Ethiopia*. Trenton, NJ: Red Press, pp. 294, 295.
- 89 My interview with Adam Jillo, July 23, 24. 1999.
90. Mohammed Hassan, the Oromo nation under Amhara administration. Op: cit.
91. Quoted in Mohammed Hassan, op: cit. pp, 35, 36.
92. This information is based in my interview with Adam Jillo, op. cit...
93. The OLF Political Program, 1970, p. 15.
- 94 .Ibid, p. 11.
95. See *Encyclopedia Britanica*, Ethiopian Transition (1991-1995); Human Rights Watch, Ethiopia: Suppressing Dissent. May 9, 2005.
96. Hamdesa Tuso. (2005). The Oromo Problems and U. S. Foreign Policy Toward the Horn of Africa.. in Seyum Hameso and Mohammed Hassan (eds.) *Arrested Development in Ethiopia: Essays Underdevelopment, and Self-Determination*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press, pp. 15-23.
97. Interview with Beyene Badesso. Obbo Beyene is one of the elders who persecuted by the TPLF regime, which led him to go into exile in the U. S. Also, I discussed about this with Dr. Tilahun Gamta, another elder who had to escape from persecution in Ethiopia. He too, fled to the U. S. as a result of the relentless persecution by the same regime.
98. *The Guardian*, Ethiopia's prime minister resigns after major political protests, February 15, 2018; Aljazeera, Ethiopia's Prime Minister, Haile Mariam Daslagen resigns, February 15, 2018; Jina moore, Ethiopia's prime minister resigns among political turmoil. New York Times, February 15, 2018.

Part II

99. See The Crisis group, Bridging the Divide in North Ethiopia, June 12, 2020; Toward The end of Ethiopia's Federal and Tigray Feud, August 14, 2020.
100. Bonnie Holcomb and Sisay Ibsa, *The Invention of Ethiopia*. Op: C.t. p, 22.
101. Ibid.,
102. The Earl Lyton. (1967). *The Stolen Desert*. London: Macdonald and Co. p. 260.
- 103 John Spence (1984). *Ethiopia at Bay: A personal Account of the Haile Selassie years..*(Algonac Michigan Reference Publications, Inc. p. 360.
104. See The Shaanachaa Report, 2004 (This report can be accessed on my website, www.hamdesa.com.)
105. See Hamdesa Tuso. (1994). OSA Conflict Report, pp. 73-76. (This report can be accessed from my website, www.hamdesa.com).
106. Report by Licho Bukua; Liccho was the chairman of foreign relations at the time. I have had extensive discussions with him regarding the conflict between the *Shane* camp and the *Camaa Cuumsas* camp. I have discussions with some other individuals from the Borana community regarding the violence which took place between the two wings.
107. See Hamdesa Tuso (2016). Araraa: Oromo Indigenous Processes of Peacemaking. In H. Tuso and M. Flaherty, *Creating the Third Force: Indigenous Processes of Peacemaking* (eds.) Lanham: Lexington Books
108. See Ayalew Duressa (2002). *Guddifachaa: Adoption practice in Oromo society with particular reference to Borana Oromo*. M. A thesis. Addis Ababa University.
109. See Donald Levine.(1972). *Wax and Gold: Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Worku Gadissa, The perils of negotiating with Ethiopian rulers. Ayyaantuu, November 20, 2018.
110. This observation is based on my experience working with the OLF leadership. I served as an [informal] advisor to the OLF from 1982 to 2004. Thus, during those years I gained valuable insight to the OLF politics and policies.
111. Keith Richburg (1992). International Team Criticizes the Ethiopian Elections. *The Washington Post*, June 24, p. A21.

112. Joseph Folger, Marshal Poole, and Randall Stutman, (2005). *Working Through Conflict: Strategies for relationship, groups, and organizations*. (5th edition). Boston: Pearson Press, p. 104. .
113. See Baffour Agyeman-Duah, (1994). *The United States and Ethiopia: Military Assistance and the Question of Security (1953-1993)*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America.
114. I have articulated on the subject of the need to advocate for Oromo national unity and the need to create peace between Oromo political actors. Please see my paper, Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation, which I presented at the Oslo Seminar hosted, by the Oromo community in Norway on March 14, 2015. (this paper can be accessed from my website, www.hamdesa.com)..