

When viewed from the factual historical record of Emperor Menelik, what appears to be criticism of Menelik is actually an attack on his ethnicity and the ethnicity of his alleged political base. As stated before the purpose of this article therefore is not to revise and regurgitate what has been debated and documented or provide defense for the hate messages against Menelik. The glorious legacy of Menelik does not lack defenders. Moreover, when compared with many Ethiopian and foreign-born historians and scholars, Menelik's critics are insignificant and inconsequential both in the arguments they marshal and their understanding of Ethiopian history. Since the reading and understanding of Ethiopian history by ethno-nationalists are distorted and out of place, one need not dignify ethnic ideologues by providing rebuttal to their utter ignorance. Nonetheless, the real motives behind the distortion and fabricated lies they spread have to be addressed. Furthermore, narrow ethnic ideologues that preach the virtues of ethnic division and dismemberment of Ethiopia have neither credibility nor moral authority to accuse Menelik as "common criminal." People who preach the virtues of differences and fragmentation instead of unity and social harmony do not have moral authority to accuse leaders who united Ethiopians for a common cause.

In a twisted and misplaced logic of Amhara-phobic ideologue, Meles, the traitor and the number one enemy of the Ethiopian people (save for his Tigrean supporters), is considered a "**world figure**" whereas Menelik is referred to "**common criminal**". Ethnic loyalty is one thing. Trying to cover up the criminal acts of a known traitor like Meles (out of blind ethnic loyalty), while trying to discredit a giant historical figure like Menelik with the help of lies is disgusting, to say the least. The aim of this paper is, therefore, to speak about the mind-set of hate mongers and Amhara bashers than provide rebuttal to their distortion of Menelik's record. When arguments are premised on lies and fabrication, there is no foundation for debate. "Lies, no matter how often repeated, cannot obliterate the truth."

In contrast to what they say about Menelik, the ethno-nationalist support for ethnic ideology and bigotry is pungent and nauseating. Unfortunately, the empty lives of ethnonationalists need to be supported with fabricated lies and false sense of superiority, which cannot be achieved through their accomplishments. Hence, their tendencies to seek resort to verbal assault of all those vis a vis whom they feel so inferior and diminutive. The only reason for their preoccupation with Menelik is to find an outlet for their repressed ethnic hatred born of a deeply entrenched inferiority complex, which I will come to later. The claim that Menelik betrayed Yohannes and sold a part of Ethiopia is even more misleading than some of the outlandish assertions of ethno-nationalists that no country with the name Ethiopia was known in the world before Yohannes.

According to *Hezbawi Democratic Program, adopted at its second Congress in May 1983*, TPLF and the ethno-nationalists stated:

"The Dogali victory, unlike the distortions of the Amhara historians, is not the victory of all Ethiopian peoples. It is the victory of peoples of Tigray and Eritrea .At the time, Yohannes subdued and collected taxes and tributes from Gondar, Gojjam, Shoa and Wello. But no country with the name Ethiopia was known in the world map and

history. Even the Shoan King Menelik was collaborating with Italy, which was making preparations to invade Eritrea and Tigray. In an attempt to weaken Tigray he was secretly dealing with the Italians. Italy was then giving Menelik money and arms”⁶².

From the foregoing, it becomes clear that contrary to the baseless assertion of ethno-nationalists, Menelik did not sell Eritrea, which was then part of Ethiopia. If Tigray and Eritrea were not part of a country known as Ethiopia, how could Menelik sell what was not part of Ethiopia? This contradiction is another proof of the grand delusion that the ethno-nationalists suffer from. **“Although Menelik appeared highly accommodating in their [Italian] interests, the Italians found to their dismay that Negusa Nagast Menelik scarcely differed from Negusa Negast Yohannes on the vital question of Ethiopian independence”⁶³.**

Contrary to TPLF’s assertions that Yohannes’ victory over Italians and Egyptians was not the victory of all Ethiopian people, a French traveler and business man by the name Pierre Arnoux, who was in Shewa, at the time of Egyptian defeat at Gundet, said, **“Shewan army had celebrated Yohanni’s victory over the Egyptians for three days. It was at this point that he (Menelik) sent his congratulations to be accompanied by a cavalry force for the continuation of the war”⁶⁴.**

What do these Tigrean ethnicists say about the collaboration of Yohannes with the British force that violated the territorial integrity of Ethiopia and marched up to Mekdela in its attempt to capture the defiant Ethiopian emperor Tewodros who chose to keep the dignity of his country by committing suicide than surrendering to a colonialist force? A visit to the British museum in London corroborates the extent of the cultural pillage that collaboration of Yohannes has resulted in when he chose to ally himself with British colonialist forces. The unruly British soldiers⁶⁵, whom Yohannes enthusiastically helped in penetrating deep into the Ethiopian territory, had no qualms whatsoever when they even violated the dead corpse of the brave emperor Tewodros as can be gleaned from the following historical record that was penned down by Henry M. Stanley who was at Makdela:

“I strolled to where the dead body of the late Master of Magdala lay on his canvas stretcher. I found a mob of officers (British) and men rudely jostling each other in the endeavour to get possession of a small piece of Theodore’s bloodstained shirt. No

⁶² - *Hezbawi Democratic Program, adopted at its second Congress in May 1983*, TPLF and the ethno-nationalists stated:

⁶³ - *Modern History of Ethiopia*, Bahru Zewde,

⁶⁴ - *Sven Rubenson, The Survival of Ethiopian Independence*, P. 336

⁶⁵ - The unruly British colonialist force which was aided and guided by Yohannes not only destroyed Mekedela, but raped Ethiopian women such that the wife of emperor Tewodros, queen Tirunesh had from a secluded position witnessing the rude behavior of the so-called civilized European army which turned proud Ethiopian women into sexual objects. For detail see Fekade Habte’s article in the *Tobia* monthly magazine Vol. 7, No. 12 (pp. 17-22) entitled the “Baytewaru Mesfin – a story about Alemayehu Tewodros”.

guard was placed over the body until it was naked. Extended on its hammock, it lay subjected to the taunts and the jests of the brutal-minded⁶⁶”.

We assume that the followers of Yohannes were also around and rubbing their hands in glee when all this was happening. Do the Tigrean admirers of emperor Yohannes like Tecola Hagos who are quick to castigate emperor Tewodros as brutal tyrant understand the pain suffered by those Ethiopians like Dejazmatch Alemayehu Tewodros (a small child who was estimated to be 9 years of age when he lost his father and mother in a matter of 5 weeks) who was forcibly taken away by the British and finally died in Britain at the age of 19 as a deeply depressed and unhappy orphan on alien British soil of the Victorian age? Alemayehu Tewodros was always unhappy and depressed after having been thrust into an alien society at that prime age. He had no one family member who could care for him and had been tossed like a ball between multiple care takers with whom he could not form any abiding emotional bond which any child needs. Do the Tigrean ethnonationalists know about some of the Ethiopians who were ostensibly taken to Britain to accompany Alemayehu Tewodros (son of emperor Tewodros) and were later transferred to what was then the British colony of New Zealand⁶⁷ and have not returned to Ethiopia ever since? What would Tigrean nationalists of today have said if Yohannes's role of collaboration in accompanying and guiding a colonial British army into the heart of Ethiopia was played by an Amhara collaborator? How would Tigreans have reacted towards an aspiring Amhara who would have gone to the extent of collaborating with British colonial forces to the extent of precipitating the death of an emperor from Tigray and the forceful displacement of his beloved child to Europe and the subsequent death of this child as a depressed orphan?

In passing, I wish to briefly touch upon a couple of points. Dr. Tseggai Mebrahatu wrote and posted a critical analysis of Menelik's reasons for not pushing the Italians out of Eritrea and the consequences to the rest of Ethiopia had emperor Menelik chose to massacre the remaining Italian forces inside Eritrea. He also wrote why Menelik chose diplomacy in order to buy time. He provided a different perspective from the hallucinatory accounts of Menelik's detractors. Dr. Tseggai was viciously attacked and insulted for his remarks and for thinking “outside the ethnic box.” In stead of debating the crucial points at hand, Tecola, who has no qualms in railing and ranting against any one who opposes his ethnicist views, tried to belittle the former as “a boy wanting to grow up fast”. This attitude reflects dismally on Tecola's poor intellectual acumen in arguing a case. And the ability to argue one's case is something that all ethnonationslaists woefully lack.

A keen observer of the current political system commented as follows:

⁶⁶ - Henry M. Stanley, Coomassie and Magdala, 1874

⁶⁷ - In 1987 a group of Ethiopians who went to New Zealand on a scholarship were invited by and subsequently met with New Zealanders who claim to be descendents of a certain Ethiopian Dejazmatch who was taken to Britain during the Napier expedition to allegedly accompany the Dejazmatch Alemayehu Tewodros who was brought to Britain by the British expeditionary force.

“TPLF and supporters appear to have lost their sense of humility and resorted into a simplistic propaganda mills. While they are forefront on ethnic politics, however, when it comes to others they apply different rules, and castigate others as narrow and separatists elements. “TPLFites,” said the observer, “try to outsmart others but fail to understand the simple logic: once you advocate and practice ethnic politics, then there is no way you can prevent others to do so. In other words, it becomes a right not a privilege”⁶⁸.

TIGRAYAN ENNOCENTRISM AND THE AMHARA FACTOR:

Ethnocentrism is the bonding of people around their imagined ethnic group. When people bond around their nation and ethnic group, it is easier to project evils onto scapegoated enemies in times of war. In the annals of world history, we have witnessed the emergence of leaders who have drummed up prejudice and xenophobia as a means of putting themselves in the saddle of power. When looked at from these perspectives, the rationale for Tigrayan ethno-nationalists’ verbal assault and terrorism on Amharas is not surprising. A regime had come to power determined to undertake a task – the elimination not only of Amharas from all aspects of social life in Ethiopia but also their capacity to fight back and defend their inalienable rights as citizens of Ethiopia. Like Hitler who targeted the Jews, Meles and his trusted cronies used slogans to identify their perceived enemies. In an interview with Paul Henze, Meles said, **“Shoan Amhara is our enemy.”** TPLF’s policies toward Amharas share two important features and objectives with that of Hitler to the extent that both TPLF and Hitler have tried to misrepresent, demonize and target what they call their enemies i.e. Amharas and Jews respectively as the source of evil for what went wrong in their respective countries (Ethiopia and Germany).

The TPLF and its supporters have tried:

1 - To criminalize and demonize the Amhara in such a way that the Amharas are made to continuously feel responsible for all the ills of Ethiopia. The incessant propaganda campaign to which Amharas are subjected force them in the long run to internalize a sense of culpability thereby making them passive onlookers as their ranks are persecuted and physically wiped out. The experience of the Amharas during the last 13 years of TPLF rule attests to this fact.

2 – To criminalize and demonize all historical symbols with which Amharas are proudly identified with. The destruction of historical monuments, the changes of names of institutions bearing Amhara names, etc belong to this category of the anti-Amhara campaign waged by the TPLF government.

3- To socially isolate, discriminate at and keep the Amharas in a state of darkness and backwardness.

⁶⁸ - Wasadan’s commentary, (EEDN 8/24/04.)

4- To punctuate the rightful place and role of Amharas as citizens of Ethiopia in a scheme which has reduced Amharas to the status of passive victims who should not raise any opposition to defend their inalienable rights. In this regard it is instructive to say what one U.S. State Department official have reportedly said, ***“Amharas are now boxed.”***

In accordance with these objectives, since 1991 the following types of wars continue to be waged on Amharas as can be evident from the following facts:

1 - Physical elimination of leaders of organizations identified with the Amharas: a case in point is the deliberate killing of Professor Asrat Woldeyes, leader of the AAPO.

2 - Use of terrorist organizations as proxies to eliminate Amhars. Cases in point are the mayhems and murder carried out in Bedno, Arba Gugu, Assebot, and Wollega by fascistic organizations such as the OPDO who have perpetrated massacres of Amharas under the supervision and watchful eyes of TPLF. We can also not forget what the fascistic Oromo organization OLF had perpetrated in Bedeno, Wellega, etc and what IFLO had perpetrated at the historic Assebot monastery where it massacred 18 monks in 1992 when it was part of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia under the TPLF. In 1999 some 16000 Amharas who have lived in eastern Wellega for generations were ethnically cleansed and uprooted from Wellega and sent to Gojjam across the Abay river. This process of ethnic cleansing had caused the brutal death of at least 1000 Amharas, the burning of their villages, the confiscation destruction of their properties, etc. The Tigrean government and its Oromo ethnonationalist hirelings that it has organized under the OPDO were responsible for this brutal act.

3 - Uprooting Amharas from the political, economic, and social life of Ethiopia through systematic deprivation of land, jobs, education, and business opportunities. Amhara business owners in so-called “Oromia” regional state are heavily taxed and then forced to abandon businesses on which their livelihood depend. Land is used as political tool. Amharas are openly and routinely discriminated at when it comes to getting permits to erect a fence much less a building a home in the apartheid system created by TPLF.

4 - Use of psychological war on the Amhara psyche. This last form of psychological war is the most vicious and panders to the passion of Tigrayan public Amhara-phobia embraced by all Tigrean followers of TPLF. Amharas and leaders such as Menilik and Haile Selassie are assailed as the enemies of the Tigrayans and all non-Amharas in Ethiopia and Amharas are held responsible for Ethiopia’s backwardness. Their legacies are painted as the worst possible episodes in the annals of Ethiopian history. Through these physical and psychological wars, the TPLF and its ethno-nationalist supporters want Amharas to be ashamed of their culture, language, leaders, and their contribution to the Ethiopian state.

At the beginning of the anti-Amhara campaign the medium used to denigrate and bash Amharas was the now defunct “Ethiopian Commentator”. In one of their publications the editors, all of whom were Eritreans and Tigrayans (including yester years’s TPLF

ideologues and the current “super-patriot” the Tigrean Ghelawdewos Araya who currently makes shrill noise about Assab port and Ethiopian territorial integrity) inserted a picture of Professor Asrat Woldeyes while he was accepting an award for his contribution in the medical field in an article submitted by a professor at The American University in Washington, DC. The text below the picture falsely states: “*the professor was awarded for his contribution for the war effort against the Ethiopian people.*” This was done by the editors of Ethiopian Commentator without the knowledge and approval of the author of who submitted the article.

The same Ethiopian Commentator inserted another picture of the former Patriarch of Ethiopian Orthodox Church. In that picture the Patriarch is seen giving financial contribution to help famine victims. The text inserted under the picture states, “*the contribution by the Patriarch was to help in Mengistu’s war effort.*” In the background of the same picture Ato Shimeles Adugna, the former Commissioner of Famine Relief is shown. However, the caption reads: “*the other dog in the picture is unidentified*”. Others gleefully replayed the scurrilous attack by the Ethiopian Commentator and its editors on the internet.

Having created a mythical enemy, “the Amhara”, and trained the Tigrayan public to reflexively hate it, the myth is later deployed to discredit anyone by saying he or she is a member of Shoan Amhara and Mengistu’s supporter. Thus instinctively, the entire talking-head cabals knew just what to say about Professor Asrat and Amharas.

Hate message by emotional speakers can sway audiences. For ethnocentric Tigrayans, Mengistu, who crushed the Ethiopian people, became an Amhara boogiemans for scaring Tigrayans and silencing TPLF’s critics. In the views of ethnocentric, all Amharas are now Mengistu’s supporters. In all honesty, TPLF nationalists should be grateful to Mengistu not the other way round. By crushing many Ethiopian patriots and silencing the rest Mengistu did a great favor to TPLF and the ethnocentrics. It should be noted that history details how often friendliness of the native people is betrayed by treachery and ethnocentrism on the part of their conquerors. If it was not for the hated Mengistu, Amharas could not have assisted TPLF to seize power and later to be victimized.

On a televised debate Meles admitted that TPLF got the support of Amharas while advancing to the center of the country to oust Mengistu. But later he turned against the same people with impunity. In lambasting the Shoan Amhara as unpatriotic and coward to fight back, Meles said: *We know Shoan Amharas. We saw Shoan Amharas. We stepped over them while they were using cow dung for fire wood and were being suffocated by the smoke.” Ye Shoan Amarotch ayitenatchewal. Kubet cia’chesu regitenatchew new yalefinew.”*

“የሽላዎን አማራ አይተ ነዋል፡ ኩባቱን ሲያጭስ ረግጠነው ነው ያለፈ ነው።”

In Debre Berhan hundreds of Amharas were picked up and put in prison for no reason. After being told they were free to leave the prison gates, TPLF combatants opened fire and killed the unsuspecting Amharas. Although the local people knew the truth, TPLF

attributed the killings to an attempt by criminals to break out from prison. Gebru Asrat, former TPLF administrator in Tigray, has been quoted as boasting,

“የአማራን አገት ቆርጠነዋል፡ ከአንግዲህ ወዲህ አንዲያቆጠቁጥ ከሱ አንጎሰላለን።”

“we have cut off the Amhara head. Soon we will uproot him from the ground.”

Another one of TPLF’s slogan and moral boost to its combatants was,

“በአማራ መቃብር ላይ ትግራይ ታብባላች”

Be’Amhara me’Qabirr Tigray Tabibalech” which translates into, ***“Tigray will blossom on the grave of Amhara”***. According to former EPDM combatant who now lives in California TPLF’s slogan was, ***“Amara Gedai”, Amhara killer***. It is not hard to imagine what the fate of Amharas would have been had some of the hard-core anti-Amhara elements in the exiled group of TPLF central committee members were sharing power with Meles today.

One of the reasons for the current anti-Amhara campaign is to scapegoat the Amharas for the crisis TPLF finds itself in. As the resistance of the Ethiopian people to the fascistic, if divisive, ethnic policies of TPLF grow, the TPLF and its supporters resort to name calling which amounts to the pillorying of Amharas. The anti-Amhara propaganda crusaders accuse Shoan-Amharas under a subtle code name “Mahal-Sefaris. And such accusations become all the more acute as the disarray and split in the ranks of TPLF increases. There is no difference between the fanatical ravings of a foaming-at-the mouth Meles Zenawi and the utterances of his one time confidant and advisor Tecola Hagos. They make no deeper point than ***“I hate you”***. Tigrayan ethnic supremacists are neurotically obsessed with ethnicity in spite of the well-established negative impact which ethnic politics has plunged Ethiopia in during the last 13 years of deadly experimentation with ethnic politics. Their obsession with ethnicity and hate for the Amhara has to do with the inferiority they feel vis a vis the Amhara. This has impelled them to blame all socio-economic problems (which were not unique to Tigrai) on an alleged Amhara enemy as though the Dergue government represented the interest of the Amhara ethnic group⁶⁹. Tecola’s fabricated stories include that the Derg regime targeted Tigrayans on the basis of their ethnicity and disproportionate number of Tigreans were victims of the Red Terror. This is unforgettable insult to the tens of thousands of Amharas whose lives were claimed by the Red Terror on the streets of Ethiopia. If one was to indulge in the distasteful business of making head count of Red Terror victims on the basis of ethnic origin, neither Tigreans nor other ethnic groups may have been able to point their fingers at Amharas as

⁶⁹ - Every sane and rational thinking Ethiopian knows that the so-called “oppressor or dominant Amharas” have not performed any better than the Tigreans. In fact by 1974, Tigrai, an Ethiopian province with less population than each one of the predominantly Amhara-inhabited regions of Gondar, Wello or Gojjam had 5 high schools while these three predominantly Amhara areas had just two high schools. These are facts which were lost on the Tigrean ethnonationalists and the luminaries of the Ethiopian Student Movement which were generating the Amhara national domination and “national oppression” theory without providing any substantive facts to support how the millions of Amharas have performed better than say the Eritreans, Adares, Tigreans, Gurages, etc. We have to add that before 1974, Tigrai sent more students to the university than Gojjam and Gonder provinces did together. The picture for northern Shoa was even more depressing than the other Amahra regions.

the latter were disproportionately over represented in terms of the number of human lives claimed by Dergue's violent repression across the various parts of Ethiopia.

Among the discoveries of Freud is the psychological process of creating enemies – which requires that for their own ego survival and sanity, people deflect their own aggression or self-hatred outward onto others. According to Freud, self-hatred is at the root of race or ethnic hatred and projection is the means of depositing unacceptable parts of oneself onto, what one perceives, as an external enemy. Communal neuroses will always be much harder to detect because they define an entire group, not an individual distinct from the group. Freud's discovery is a clear manifestation of Tigrayan ethnic supremacists' obsession with hatred for everyone but Tigregna speakers.

THE MAHAL-SEFARI MASK

The latest assault on Amhara, especially Shoan Amhara, comes from a website owned and operated by Tecola Hagos. At first glance, Tecola's webpage looks like any one of the thousands of personal home pages but visitors who scroll down soon discover that the website is devoted to hate speech. Just like the neo-Nazi rant, it contains articles that support ethnic ideology and Amhara bashing. The code name used for Amhara bashing this time is “**Mahal-Sefari**”. The reason why the owner of the webpage chooses to use this code name is to mask the truth about the intended targets of his verbal assault.

What does Mahal Sefari mean? When used in its geographic context the term “Mahal Sefari” refers to central Ethiopia. However, Tecola proves his shallow understanding of the meaning of Mahal-Sefari when he uses it in a pejorative context. In ancient times the term “Mahal-Sefari” meant a specialized units of the Imperial army attached to the palace. The army had multi-national dimension as opposed to being exclusive Amhara as to Tecola would like us to believe. As a political term, the correct meaning of Mahal-Sefari is “Liberal” as opposed to extremism. Since those specialized units attached to the Imperial army are long gone, Tecola's reason for raising the “Mahal-Sefari” issue cannot be any other than for the purpose of validating his well-known hatred for Amharas. On all accounts of the term “Mahal-Sefari”, the self-appointed “professor” showed utter ignorance about the “what” and the “who” of the subject matter he repeats ad nauseam.

In geographic terms, Mahal-Sefari refers to Shoan Amharas districts of Ankober, Anstokia, Efrata, Gidim, Gishe, Insaro, Menz, Merha-Bete, Moret, Tegulet, Qewet, Yifat, Washa, Wogda, plus Shoan Oromo regions of Ada'a, Ambo, Jeldu, Gindeberet, Guder, Meacha-Tulama in Selale.(see Getatachew Haile, Adwa Victory Centenary Conference Proceedings, 1996]

The code name Mahal-Sefari is used as a cover and to hide the intended targets – Shoan Amharas in particular and Amharas in general. No one, least of all, Amharas should have any doubt about Tecola's aim and intended targets of this vilification campaign. As Winston Churchill said, “appeasement reflects hope that the crocodile will eat you last.” Since we are dealing with a species of primitives, like crocodiles in the prowl,

ethnocentric are dangerous predators that need to be checked. As someone once said, “to be hoodwinked once is human, but to be taken for a second time is inexcusable.”

The leading anti Shoan-Amhara and anti-Menelik campaigner Tecola Hagos falsely accuses and demonizes the Mehal-Sefaris (all of the people from the aforementioned regions) as the enemies of the Ethiopian people, the reasons for its backwardness and accuses these Shoan Amharas as collaborating with Meles. Let us assume for a moment that what Tecola says is true and Meles’ advisors and political cadres are Mehal -Sefaris. Why is it then the entire economy of the country, the major private businesses, public agencies, the military, the security apparatus and other aspects of Ethiopia are under the control of Tigrayans? Why is it that there are no developments in the so-called Mehal-Sefari regions which have practically been excluded from any development process while Tigray has continued to absorb the lion’s share of Ethiopia’s national budget? Why are the pharmaceutical, chemical, textile, clinics, institutions of higher education, and road constructions concentrated and limited to Tigray if the Mehal Sefaris are in the position of power to influence policy decision that favors their region? It is doubtful that Tecola can provide convincing evidence to these pointed questions and show that the Tigrayan regime under the leadership of Meles and Sebhat Nega is influenced and advised by Shoan Amharas. The anti Shoan Amhara campaign is a continuation of the agenda doctored and rehearsed at Dedit during TPLF’s bush dwelling years.

In the early days of TPLF, any Tigrayan national who dared to speak out against what he or she perceived to be wrong had to be labeled as “sell out” or in the language of TPLF, “Shoawaweyan Tegar,” Shoan Tigrayans. Gidey Bahirishum is a Tigrayan national who witnessed the fate of ordinary Tigrayans in the hands of TPLF when the latter controlled part of Tigray during the war for the liberation of Eritrea and Tigray. In his book, “AMORA”⁷⁰ Mr. Gidey tells very disturbing stories about Tigrayan victims in the hands of TPLF cadres. Their own sons and daughters executed Tigrayan parents who questioned the motives behind the Woyane slogan, “Tigre and Amharas “or” Ethiopia and Tigray. The executions were carried out on the order of Tigrayan cadres like Meles and others. After Tigray came under EPLF/TPLF control, untold numbers of Tigrayans were accused as supporters of EDU and shot point blank. The victims were denied proper burial and their remains were left in the open for wild animals. The executed victims were castigated as “anti-Tigre”, “**kora huru Amharu**”, (Amhara dogs), and “**Shoawaweyan tegaru**” (Shoan-Tigrayans). Mr. Gidey’s story is a clear example of the continuation of the previous anti-Amhara campaign to the present time by the ethno-nationalists. This episode testifies to the ease with which ethnocentric can punctuate the lives of people who oppose their ideas and even take joy in the death of their own kind.

WHO GAVE UP ERITREA TO THE ITALIANS - THE HEWETT TREATY OF 1875 – 1876 and ‘POLITICA TIGRIGNA’

The second, perhaps the most important, point I wish to raise is the failure of the ethno-nationalist to place side by side the events that lead the Italians to occupy Eritrea and Emperor Yoahannes’ role in the occupation when finger pointing at the alleged crimes of

⁷⁰ - Gidey Bahirishum, Amora

Menelik. The important factor for Italian occupation of Eritrea that the ethno-nationalists mask and hide from public discussion and scrutiny is what is known as “*Hewett treaty of 1875 –1876*” with the British, signed and ratified by emperor Yohannes.

The treaty is important for two reasons. First, the British deceived the emperor and never carried out their part of the agreement when Italy occupied Eritrea. Second, the treaty became the single reason for the Mahdist to attack Ethiopia, the death of the Emperor himself, and for Italy to move at will and take over Eritrea. According to the foremost Ethiopianist, Professor Sven Rubenson, by signing the Hewett treaty, Yohannes has “traded one weak enemy for two strong ones, the Mahdist state and Italy⁷¹.”

Article III of the Hewett treaty reads:

“His Majesty the Negoosa Negust engages to facilitate the withdrawal of the troops of His Highness the Khedive, from Kassala, Amedib and Sanhit through Ethiopia to Massawah⁷².”

The primary interest of the British and Egyptians was the rescue of their garrisons from the Mahdist attack. The Emperor and Ras Alula gave their full cooperation in accordance with the terms agreed in the treaty. Following this unequal treaty between Yohannes and the British, in June 1885 Ethiopian forces under the command of Wagshum Gebru and Bejirond Lewte lost 600 fighters and finally relieved the Egyptian troops at Qallabat from the Mahadist siege⁷³. In September 1885 Ethiopian force numbering 10,000 fighters under the command of Ras Alula marched to Kufit and relieved the Anglo-Egyptian forces that were under siege of the Sudanese Mahidists. The defeat of the Mahidists was possible at the cost of 1550 Ethiopian lives⁷⁴. In January 1887 king Tekle Haimanot of Gojjam had to march with his 100,000 army to Tabarek, Qallabat where he defeated the Mahidist army⁷⁵. According to Rubenson, when it was discovered that Metemma and Girra had not fallen to the Mahdists, Yohannes accepted additional obligations, and these two garrisons were saved together with Amideb and Keren. This led Mahdists to attack Ethiopia. The emperor ordered Ras Alula and the entire Ethiopian army to abandon

⁷¹ - Sven Rubenson, *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence*

⁷² - Teklesadik Mekuria, *Atse Yohannes enna Ye Ethiopia Andinet*, pp 273

⁷³ - Tsegaye Tegenu, *The Evolution of Ethiopian Absolutism, the Genesis and the Making of the Fiscal Military State 1696-1913*, Uppsala-Sweden, 1996.

⁷⁴ - Tsegaye Tegenu, *The Evolution of Ethiopian Absolutism, the Genesis and the Making of the Fiscal Military State 1696-1913*, Uppsala-Sweden, 1996.

⁷⁵ - Tsegaye Tegenu, *The Evolution of Ethiopian Absolutism, the Genesis and the Making of the Fiscal Military State 1696-1913*, Uppsala-Sweden, 1996.

Eritrea and move to the Metemma front. He replaced the experienced and master tactician military leader Ras Alula by Ras Haile Mariam. The replacement of Ras Alula was one of the reasons for the Mahdist force to gain the upper hand in the battle. Meanwhile, the Italians with the tacit support of the British found an opportune moment to move from their fortified bases in Massawa to Eritrean highlands and occupy Asmara and Karen, albeit with the full cooperation of Eritreans. The cooperation of Eritreans with foreign invaders was not new as could be gleaned from the documented records of Eritrean local elites such as Ras Walda-Mikael Solomon of Hamasen who played a major role by defecting to the Egyptian side after the Battle of Gundat in 1875.

In accordance with the Italian *“politics of Tigrigna and the Convention of Mereb”*, on December 6, 1891 on the banks of Mereb, in a solemn convention between General Gandolfi and Ras Mengesha, in the presence of many officials among others Ras Alula, Mengesha recognized for Italy the border Mareb-Belesa-Muna. Tigrayan princes, headed by Ras Mengesha Yohannes, swore an oath of solidarity with the Italians. The ethno-nationalists who made Amhara bashing their lifetime occupation never mention the crimes and duplicities of some highland Eritreans and Tigryans. It was the cooperation of some highland Eritreans aristocrats first with Egypt and later with the British and Italians that led to the occupation of Massawa. The occupation of Massawa was a prelude to Adwa. Unfortunately those who believe they have monopoly over the truth are ignorant of their own history while defaming Menelik.

Solomon Gashaw writes:

“The Hewett Treaty was very costly to Ethiopia. It infuriated the Mahdist, who retaliated by invading Begemder and burning down the city of Gonder. It is not clear why Emperor Yohannes IV, who never abandoned his claim of Massawa settled for a mere free transit of goods⁷⁶”.

One of the bandits who collaborated both with Egyptians and the Italians against Yohannes and Alula was Dejazmatch Debebb Araya. Debebb Araya and Dejazmatch Sebhat of Tigray who happens to be a descendent of Dejazmatch Sebagedes of Agame were in the service of the Italian colonialists as spies, guides and suppliers of weapons and other military provisions until one week before the Adwa war when they changed side and joined the Ethiopian forces under emperor Menelik. They were instrumental in the occupation of Eritrea by Italy. The aspiring historian and ethnic ideologue never mention their crimes. The allegation that Menelik gave active support to Italians and Egyptians against Yohannes is bogus. According to Prof. Sven Rubenson, *“all available evidence, in fact, points to Cairo and not Liche or Wereylu (Menelik’s two main residences) as the place where the ‘conspiracy’ originated⁷⁷”*.

⁷⁶ - Solomon Gashaw, *Adowa Victory Centenary Conference Proceeding, 1996 P. 102.*

⁷⁷ - Sven Rubenson, *The Survival of Ethiopia*