

Italians showed no interest in abiding by the terms of the Hewett treaty. Rubenson writes, ***“On the contrary, they had come to inherit the estate of the Egyptian, Bogos and all”***⁷⁸. In spite of his misgivings to save his former enemies the Egyptians, Yohannes trusted the British as an ally but was betrayed by them.

The following was what Yohannes regretfully intimated about the mistake he had made in signing the Hewett Treaty that amounted to a political alliance⁷⁹ with the British colonialist forces. ***“Yohannes stated, however, that he had been greatly wronged by both Italians and English in spite of the fact that he had come to their aid against the Mahdi”***⁸⁰

“On April 20, 1888 Emperor Yohannes IV mobilized 80,000 peasant army to stop Italian incursion and dislodge them from Sa’ati. But after parading his force for weeks the emperor abandoned the idea of ousting the Italians. Instead he decided to march south and push out the Mahdists out of Ethiopian territory. Besides his decision to quit fighting Italians, he also removed Ras Alula from his post of governorship of Mereb Melash. The decision of the emperor Yohannes signaled a weakness in the Ethiopian defense. It encouraged Italy to occupy more territory. Had the emperor with his superior force fought Italy at Sa’ati his victory could have made Adowa unlikely”⁸¹.

At the 1996 Adowa Victory Centenary Conference Professor Getatchew Haile had this to say about British betrayal. ***“The tragic story of British treachery is probably well known to most of you. When ‘poor Egypt had no army worthy of the name, no officers deserving of confidence, no money, no credit and no men,’ its protectors, the British, turned to Ethiopia, who had everything Egypt lacked, and used her. Signing a treaty at Adowa in 1884, they asked the Emperor to use his army to facilitate the withdrawal through Ethiopia of the Egyptian colonialist troops besieged by the Sudanese. In return, Ethiopia was promised by the treaty the return of the territories annexed to Sudan and access to the port of Massawa.”***⁸². He further stated, ***“Once the Italians took the port, they started inching into the hinterland. This angered Ras Alula, the governor of the region, so he destroyed all whom came as far as Dogali (Jan 1887).***

⁷⁸ - Sven Rubenson, The Survival of Ethiopia

⁷⁹ - Hertslet, Map of Africa by Treaty, third edition, Vol. II, pp 422

⁸⁰ - Documeti Diplomatici, as quoted by Ernst Work in his book entitled, “Ethiopia a Pawn in European Diplomacy”, published 1935

⁸¹ - Ibid

⁸² - Getachew Haile, Adowa Victory Conference Proceedings, 1996

But the Emperor, who believed that the Italians would leave his country, reprimanded Ras Alula through peaceful negotiations⁸³”.

Call it a blunder or what you may, nonetheless it was the grave mistake made by Yohannes that handed Eritrea over to the Italians. Menelik therefore inherited the problems left by Yohannes. The motive of the ethno-nationalists for accusing Menelik as “common criminal” is not based on the facts but based on his ethnicity.

THE PUNISHMENT OF TRAITORS

One of Tecola’s pre-occupation with Menelik is the amputation of Eritrean askaris at the end of the Adowa campaign. There are written accounts of the amputation by eyewitnesses. They all say the same thing. Emperor Menelik wanted the askaris to be punished by prison terms. The Bishop Abune Mathewos, Rases Mengesha, Alula, Empress Taitu and other Ethiopian officials rejected Menelik’s proposal and wanted the traitors to be amputated. Understanding the prevailing sentiment of the wounded and Dead and accordance with the recommendations of the officials, it was decided that the traitors should be amputated. Therefore, it was not Menelik who suggested and decided their fate. The Tigrian Rases were the ones who were in the forefront calling for the punishment of the traitors. Sadly today Menelik is held as the person responsible for this. Tecola should know that the punishment of traitors in the “civilized Europe of Menelik’s time was public execution. In today’s Saudi Arabia, petty thieves are routinely amputated and put in prison. Traitors are not given a chance to speak before their fate is sealed by firing squad. The Askaris lost limbs but their lives were spared due to Menelik’s interventions. This is a fact Tecola and his likes find it hard to accept.

After the Ethiopian army was asked to lay its arm and peacefully surrender, EPLF executed about 4,000 Ethiopian war prisoners inside Asmara prison. Tecola was with TPLF when this happened. I don’t believe he raised any objection when Ethiopian war prisoners were executed in violations of the Geneva Convention. Yet, he shades crocodile tears about the askaris who fought against Yohannes, Alulua, Menelik and Ethiopia. Considering their treachery in supporting of the enemy to kill thousands of Ethiopians who at Adowa, the traitors deserved worse.

ETHNICITY AS A FACTOR IN ETHIOPIAN POLITY

The tradition of ethnic identification and clannishness in Ethiopian history is more pronounced among Tigregna speakers and Adares (currently known as the Eastern Weyeanes) than Amharas, Oromos, southerners or any other ethnic group. Under the regime of Meles Zenawi, almost all high profile government position appointees are either Tigrayans or Eritreans. Every public organization has at least three layers of Tigrayan directors and managers. From top to bottom Tigregna speakers serve as political cadres, security agents and spies. Oromos, southerners, Amharas, etc are

⁸³ - Getatchew Haile, 1996 Adowa Victory Centenary Conference Proceedings.

marginalized and relegated to token and lower level positions. In recent military promotions 11 out of 18 generals were Tigrayans. The list goes on.

In contrast to TPLF's hegemony, the political system under both Menelik and Haile Selassie provided social mobility. Teshale Tibebe writes the following: ***“A slave captured in war could become a general if, in subsequent service, he proved himself courageous and resourceful, and personally loyal to the sovereign. For example, during the latter part of Emperor Menelik’s reign and in the period after his death, Fitawrary Habte Giorgis (an Oromo) was one of the most powerful men in Ethiopia. Yet not only was he from a humble non-Amhara background; he was brought to Menelik’s court as a young war captive⁸⁴”***. Teshale further explains, “Haile selassie used to a great political advantage this ethnic-blind system of recruitment. His appointments to high office hardly showed any ethnic preference. He was as comfortable (even more so), with Oromos from Wallaga as he was with Amharas from Gondar ⁸⁵”. The propaganda “Amhara oppressive rule” is therefore hogwash. The ethno-nationalists have not and could not prove with certainty how Shoan-Amharas in particular and Amharas in general benefited from the “Amhara hegemony”. Another observer noted: ***“In Ethiopia, proponents of ethnic domination can not provide evidence of state sponsored policies of ethnic domination. The cause of ethnic polarization is rooted in the frustration of ethnic elite over limited resources both in economic and political realms. Unlike the masses, it is the elite who feel the brunt of competition in urban areas. The elite are the most significant social segments of the society that nurture and develop the feeling of ethnonationalism. They, however, succeed in this project where there are administrative abuses, lopsided development. Such abuses could be the work of any social segment that controls the state and its political machinery. In Ethiopia the state had never been under the exclusive control of a single ethnic group until 1991⁸⁶”***.

The architects of the apartheid system in contemporary Ethiopia and ethnic ideologues like Tecola pride themselves on their fight for their tribe and at the same time claim allegiance to Ethiopian nationalism. The ethno-nationalists believe they can overcome their inferiority complex by insulting and degrading Menilik and Shoan-Amharas. Inferiority complex is a disease that has no cure. I don't believe if the ashes from Menelik's and Haile Selassie's remains were mixed with water and used as cure for the malady affecting the ethno-nationalists, would help them overcome the affliction. Among the discoveries of Freud is the psychological process of creating enemies - which requires that for their survival and sanity, people project their own self-hatred outward onto others. According to Freud, self-hatred is at the root of race or ethnic hatred and

⁸⁴ - Teshale Tibebeu , The Making of Modern Ethiopia, 1896- 1974.

⁸⁵ - Teshale Tibebeu, The Making of Modern Ethiopia

⁸⁶ - Solomon Gashaw, Adowa Victory Conference Proceedings, 1996. p. 98

projection is the means with which this hatred is externalized and blamed on others. It is no wonder then in the ethnicist Tigrean regime and its apologists and ideological gurus like Tecola Hagos try to trash Menelik, his legacies and the people of Shoa and by extension all Amharas whom they consider as the bete noirs of Ethiopia. By attacking what they believe is the symbol of “Amhara hegemony”, they hope Amharas would be forced to give up their cultural identity and succumb to their design.

It was suggested that the “Maha-Sefaris” do not fight and depend on others for their freedom. If the ethno-nationalist did not have a shaky knowledge of history, he should have been mindful of how the Mahal-Sefaris at Amba Alagie, under the leadership of Fitawrari Gebeyehu, dealt a deadly blow to the askaris and their Italian masters at the battle of Adowa. It was Gebeyehu and Mahal-Sefaris who annihilated Major Toselli and his Eritrean askaris.

While Makonnen Walda-Mikael, now Ras Makonnen, was negotiating with Italians for their peaceful evacuation [from Tigray], Fitawrari Gebeyehu, undeterred by his own illness, led his men in a literally uphill struggle against the well-entrenched Italians. The Italians were routed; their commander was among the casualties⁸⁷. After the Ethiopian victory at Adowa, Tigrayans immortalized Gebeyehu as follows:

የአድዋ ስላሴን ጣሊያን አረከሰው
ገበየሁ በጥቅም ግባና ቀድሰውን

The above couplet approximately translates into the following lines:

***The Adwa Selassie (church) has been desecrated by the enemy (Italy)
Gebeyehu, please enter the church premise and restore its holiness!!***

One of Tecola’s admirers reminded us that Tigrayans shared whatever food they had available with Menelik’s army during the Adowa campaign. What he forgot to mention was that over seven thousand Ethiopians paid the ultimate price with their lives in defending Tigray and equal number were wounded and disabled. Unlike TPLF, Menelik did not demand compensation from Tigrayans or erected a monument for the dead at a cost of \$2 million. Yet, ethno-nationalists keep reminding us to be grateful for alleged food provided to Menelik’s army as if food is more important than human life.

The leading anti-Menelik and anti-Shoan Amhara campaigner operates in contradiction. On the one hand he condemns all Shoans using the code name “Mahal-Sefaris”. On the other he writes and praises individuals he previously accused as the enemies of the Ethiopian people. A case in point is an article Tecola wrote and posted on his webpage to pay tribute to the late Ethiopian Prime Minister Tsehafe Tezaz Aklilu Habtewold. The posting of eulogizing article about Ato Aklilu Habtewold in his website is self-serving

⁸⁷ - Bahiru Zewdie, Modern History of Ethiopia, 1991

and deceptive for a Tigrean hatemonger who grew up hating Ethiopians of Amhara origin such as Ato Akililu Habtewold. It is also a dishonor to Ato Akililu to be flattered by a Tigrean ethnonationalist like Tecola who stood for the ethnicization of Ethiopian politics (fragmentation) something which the patriotic Aklilu Habtewold fought against diplomatically during the first experimentation with ethnic politics between 1936-1941) (the second being the one we have witnessed from 1991 till today under TPLF). Bees can't make honey and sting at the same time. Only gullible Ethiopians, particularly those Amharas who are easily carried away by the rhetorical exclamations of Tigrean nationalists like Tecola about the current violation of Ethiopian territorial integrity, can fall victim of their ignorance. As the English say, "not all that glitters is gold". And let me say that not all ethnonationalists like Tecola and Co. who currently pander to the patriotic passions of Ethiopians have the best of intentions about Ethiopia while simultaneously failing to denounce the very policies of ethnic politics which Bantustanized Ethiopia and facilitated the bullying of Ethiopia by the diminutive Eritrea which used to import 2/3 of its food from Ethiopia. The recent invitation of an ethnicist like Tecola to address an Ethiopian audience which seems to be against the ethnic fragmentation of Ethiopia is a sad commentary on the level of consciousness of the Ethiopian Diaspora regarding the checkered track-records of ethnicists like Tecola and Co⁸⁸. Equally, the effort of the likes of Amhara-phobic individuals who shower words of flattery on the late Ethiopian prime Minister Akiliu Habtewold while denouncing the entire Shoan Amharas as being responsible for the problems Ethiopia has been through (from the time of Sahle Selassie till today), is self serving at best and deceptive at its worst.

TPLF and its ethno-nationalist foot soldiers are refractory or impervious to any logic beyond Meles' mantra, "the enemy is Shoan Amhara." Previously the ethno-nationalist patriarch claimed that the term "Amhara" is a linguistic concept but does not relate to people living in a geographically defined area. Ludicrous! If that is the case for the Amhara then the concept "Tigrayan" refers to language but not ethnic identity. The suggestion that term Amhara is a linguistic concept is another attempt to deconstruct the Amhara ethnic identity and culture. Ironically the process of uprooting Amharas is partly supported by misguided Amhara intellectuals. Some Amhara intellectuals have given moral and material support to ethno-nationalists, i.e., TPLF, EPLF and OLF. They have yet to wake up and see the reality of their misdeeds.

Besides the obvious reasons stated above, the paramount reason for war on Amharas is to divert public attention from the rampant nepotism and unjustifiably disproportionate economic, social and cultural development of their welfare state – Tigray⁸⁹. They want

⁸⁸ - We urge Ethiopians in the diaspora to check the records of individuals like Tecola before inviting them as guest speakers to address "burning Ethiopian issues of national significance".

⁸⁹ - For those who doubt the strong feelings of the ordinary Ethiopian about the unjustified pillage of Ethiopia's resources for the benefit of Tigreans, one has to only look back at the reaction of the spontaneous actions and outburst of anger expressed in the streets of Addis Abeba during the 1998 student protest. At the time, marginalized sections of the Ethiopian society who have been forced out on the streets of Addis Abeba targeted Tigrean businesses in their violent attack that lasted several hours. Understandably and not surprisingly that spontaneous action has sent a shudder down the spine of Tigrean ethnicists who

non-Tigrayan Ethiopians to focus their attention on the imaginary enemy – the Amhara while they rob the rest of Ethiopia blind. The rest of Ethiopia is to be used for their goal of making Tigray self-sufficient. They use all means of deception and fake history to justify the looting and carting of public property to their Tigrean welfare state. Hence the acronym, TPLF has become synonymous with **“Tigrayan Peoples Looters Front”**. Tecola and cheerleaders arrogantly and unabashedly say there is nothing wrong if Tigray shared the national wealth. But sharing the national wealth does not mean using every conceivable reason to develop one region at the expense of all others. As things stand now, the ruling clique is using the lion’s share of the country’s internal resources and external foreign aid for the development of Tigray.

“ETHIOPIA IS BETTER UNDER MELES”

By sugar coating the evil work of their altar ego, Meles Zenawi, as the right path to democratization of the Ethiopian society, the Ethno-nationalist provide false alibi to the Ethiopian reality. In a bizarre twist of the truth, the self-righteous ethno-nationalist and former Woyane high priest tells us that Ethiopia is better under Meles than all of his predecessors. The facts on the ground tell different stories. A glimpse of the Ethiopian reality today paints the following pictures:

1. During the last 13 years malaria infestation was resurrected and is killing thousands of Ethiopians after the Tigrean regime deliberately dismantled the Ethiopian Malaria Control Service in 1995, laying off more than 90 senior lab technicians, epidemiologists, medical microbiologists, etc from the head office in Addis Abeba and hundreds of others all across the country thereby exposing millions of people in areas south of Tigray to the scourge of Malaria epidemics⁹⁰. Meanwhile the Malaria Control program in Tigray has been strengthened with manpower, logistical support and network of early warning system that has been put in place down to the village level. Today more people die of malaria epidemics than at any one time in the annals of Ethiopian history including the periods under Menelik or Haile Selassie.
2. On the continent of Africa, Ethiopia is the country with the second largest population (only second to South Africa) in terms of the number of people affected by HIV/AIDS. For the most part the HIV/AIDS pandemic is the result of neglect and indifference by the TPLF regime and the destruction of the basic unit

thought all was calm in the “democratic Ethiopia” of “nations, nationalities and peoples” where Tigreans claimed that they have guaranteed the equality of all Ethiopians. As the spontaneous actions of the street demonstrators have shown, Tigreans have not convinced Ethiopians of non-Tigrean origin (save Tigreans and Adares) that they have indeed brought about this equality. If the insensitivity of the Tigrean ethnicists continues unabated, we are sure that we will witness even more horrendous things that will leave behind deep scars on our minds. Have the Tecola’s and Co. who continue to spew their venom against the “alleged” Shoan and Amhara enslavers awoken to the reality of their own making which is engulfing them like a whirlwind?

⁹⁰ - Assefa Negash, Ethnic Regionalization & its Ramification On Health: A Study of Malaria Epidemics in Ethiopia, Ethiopian Register magazine, August 1997, pp 22-28

- of a society i.e a family by the ethnic politics which has led to the displacement of millions of Ethiopians internally (demobilization of the Ethiopian national army, ethnic conflicts fuelled by the TPLF, massive lay-offs motivated by ethnic cleansing, etc). .
3. In spite of the fact that 11 billion dollars have been injected or poured into the country in the form of foreign aid and debt relief, hunger still stalks 14 million citizens.
 4. Ethnic violence and genocide have been galvanized by the deliberate policy of the ethnic balkanization of the Ethiopian society. What transpired in Bedeno, Arba Gugu, Arsi Neghele, Wellega, Gedeo and only recently in Gambella have bear witness to the destructive consequences of TPLF's ethnic politics. .
 5. The ideological apparatus of the state is staffed by Tigreans who control not only the highest political offices of the country but also control the scaling heights of the economy. Tigreans have effectively excluded and marginalized other political and ethnic groups from any commensurate role in the economic, social and political life of the country.
 6. Trafficking of young Ethiopian girls to the Middle East as domestic workers forced many of them to engage in prostitution and commit suicide because of the humiliation they suffered in the hands of their Arab hosts. In January 200, Lebanese authorities returned the bodies of 67 Ethiopian women to Ethiopia. The women had been trafficked into prostitution and had been sexually abused; suicide was the registered cause of death for all of them⁹¹". The trafficking of young women is one form of profit making enterprise of the regime and its Tigrean supporters. The regime receives hundreds of thousands of dollars for issuance of visas and passports.
 7. According to a survey released on October 12, 2004 by the UN Economic Commission for Africa, Ethiopia ranked last for the way its government runs public affairs. Ethiopia fell short on corruption, political representation, economic management and respect for human rights, says the UN report. The survey added that in Ethiopia and four African countries there were doubts about the commitment of government agencies to respect and implement the rule of law.
 8. Inside and out side the country innocent Tigrayans are castigated and shunned by the vast majority of Ethiopians because of TPLF's misrule and its ethnic policies. Most often than not, Tigrayans who frequent Ethiopian restaurants are shunned, ostracized and treated with contempt. Throughout the U.S. a handful of Tigreans attend the same churches with other Ethiopians. The majorities of them either attend their own separate churches or stay home due to resentment by other Ethiopians for their support to TPLF.

⁹¹ - International Organization for Migration, "Ethiopian Women Trafficked to the Arab Countries, "Trafficking in Migrants, No. 20 (December 1999/January 2000)

9. Grinding poverty and political oppression is forcing thousands of Ethiopians to leave their country for life in exile and humiliation in refugee camps.
10. Hatred and discrimination on the basis of one's ethnic origin are common practices under TPLF apartheid system. A good example of this is the discriminatory educational system in the so-called "Killils" or ethnic enclosures south of Tigray like the so-called Amhara, Oromo, Southern, Afar and Somali Killils (or ethnic enclosures a la Bantustan). In order to deny equal educational opportunity to non-Tigreans (ethnic Amharas, Oromos, Somalis, Afars, southerners, etc) in favor of Tigrayans, the language of instruction (for all subjects except Tigrigna) from grade four onwards up to the completion of high school is English in Tigray regional state. Children from areas outside Tigray region are given instructions in English beginning only at grade nine and as such forced to eventually drop out massively out of high school as they, unlike their Tigrean counterparts, have not picked up the English language (the medium of instruction in high schools in Ethiopia) early on in life (i.e. beginning at grade 4).

The massive attrition or drop-out rate witnessed among non-Tigreans from the high school system comes about on account of the fact that non-Tigreans have been deliberately made to be drilled in their own local vernacular languages during the first 8 years of their schooling to the exclusion of English which becomes a medium of instruction in high schools⁹². The self-righteous Tigrean ethnonationalists like Tecola

⁹² - It is instructive at this point to share with readers what Seye Abraham, the now disgraced former TPLF luminary, who is currently in prison, instructed Tigrean students at a public rally held in the town of Aksum. Seye said to his Tigreans audience **"You should learn Amharic. Your future is not in Tigray but elsewhere in the rest of Ethiopia south of Tigray. As such you need to master the Amharic language which allows you to move about anywhere in Ethiopia and earn your living"**. At the same time, in central, southern, western and eastern Ethiopia i.e. in all areas outside the predominantly Amhara areas, parents have been denied the opportunity of sending their children to schools where Amharic language is taught. This policy would tie non-Tigreans to their respective ethnic enclosures while allowing Tigreans to thrive and build their lives by moving about freely across the whole length and width of the country. By making use of the unwritten laws that favor them in the Ethiopia of today, whose resources they monopolistically control, the mastery of Amharic facilitates Ethiopia's "golden" people the advantages that accrue to rulers. After all ethnic entitlement and not democracy was that for which the **"golden people"** (Melles's description of Tigreans) from Tigray have fought for during their 17 years struggle against the **"Amhara regime of the Dergue"** to use Aregawi Berhe's apt expression. Aregawi Berhe uttered these words at a public meeting held in the Hague, Holland on July 7, 1991. Aregawi stated at that meeting saying, **"For us the Dergue regime was an Amhara regime as its support base was formed by the Amhara people"**. The late TPLF leader Assefa Mammo, who addressed a public meeting organized by TPLF supporters in Amsterdam, Holland on October 5, 1991 uttered the following insensitive and ethnicist remarks. **"There is nothing wrong about the transfer of resources to Tigray and Eritrea. This is because whereas the people of Ethiopia south of Tigray were contributing money to the Dergue military government for the purchase of bombs, bullets and ammunition which were used to kill and maim the peoples of Tigray and Eritrea, the people of these two regions were fighting on their own the fascist military government of the Dergue"**. Assefa Mammo, a notorious ethnicist, who is better known for not mincing his words when it comes to stating his obnoxious ethnicist views, uttered these insensitive remarks when he was asked the reasons for the disproportionate transfer of resources to Tigray and the transfer of 500 million Birr (in one go) from the Ethiopian Commercial Bank to the Eritrean government shortly after TPLF's seizure of power in May 1991. This was the time when the likes of Tecola

cannot tell us with absolute certainty that these kinds of naked and blatant discrimination in public education were the norm under Menelik or Haile Selassie or Dergue regimes that they dub Amhara. The end result of this practice will have unintended consequences for the future relationship between Ethiopians favored by the regime (Tigreans) and those discriminated and marginalized by this same Tigrean regime. If the foregoing facts are something the ethno-nationalists are proud of today, they live to regret it later when the collapse of the apartheid system Tigreans have built would definitely crumble into pieces. And that time is not long in coming or is not far off. Tecola's statement that Ethiopia is better off under Meles than Menelik or Haile Selassie is a clear manifestation of his undivided support for the apartheid system created by TPLF.

Tecola asks if a single high-rise building would have been built if Meles were not in power. This is another classic example of how ethno-nationalists cannot think outside the box. Self-interest or ethnic-interest is equated with national interest. In sharp contrast to his make-believe story of standing for the welfare of ordinary Ethiopians, Tecola reveals the truth that when he says ordinary Ethiopians he means Tigrayans only.

THE LEGACY OF EMPEROR YOHANNES

While discrediting and viciously attacking emperors Tewodros, Menelik, and Haile Selassie and by extension the Amharas, the self-acclaimed erudite Mr. Hagos reminded us that the Tigrayan emperor Yohannes did no harm to Ethiopia adding that Yohannes was pious and fair in all his public conducts. The Amharic proverb "Le Ras Sikorsu Ayasnsu" captures Tecola's insensitivity and lack of objective judgment when it comes to passing verdict on the merits or demerits of Yohannes who hails from Tigrai. Tecola topped his bigotry with a tribute to Emperor Yohannes by stating his partisan admiration when he stated that Yohannes was the most intelligent leader that Ethiopia had seen since eons.

Let me state at the outset that it is not my intention to write and discredit emperor Yohannes in the same manner as Tecola or other ethnicist Tigreans like Aregawi and Co. have done by demonizing and dehumanizing emperors Tewodros, Menelik, Haile Selassie and lately Negus Sahle-Selassie. I acknowledge the sacrifices and the ultimate price emperor Yohannes paid with his life in defense of Ethiopia. Nothing said here is meant to imply that Emperor Yohannes was less patriotic or should be treated harshly. He was emperor of all Ethiopians even though most Tigrayans attribute value to his leadership on the basis of his ethnic identity. Ethiopians of his time and the present time immortalize emperor Yohannes as a leader who fought to preserve the independence and the territorial integrity of Ethiopia. As he had many good qualities as a leader, emperor

were serving the TPLF government as advisors and ideological luminaries of the regime they now condemn of being pro-Eritrean. In fact the unscrupulous Tigrean ethnicist Assefa Mammo added, **"had the Eritreans asked for a ransom or compensation for all the human and material destruction wrought by Ethiopians, then Ethiopia would not have been able to pay for the wanton destruction it has precipitated in Eritrea"**.

Yohannes's legacy like all other emperors of Ethiopia before or after him, was not without blame and criticism. Therefore, the truth must be told in order to balance Tecola's one-sided admiration and excuses for any shortcomings of emperor Yohannes. We should be mindful of the adage, "It is easier to believe a lie that one has heard a thousand times than to believe a fact that no one has heard before."

Unlike the present day ethno-nationalists, Ethiopians in general show greatest respect for their leaders irrespective of the ethnic origin of the leaders. Ordinary Ethiopians immortalize leaders in their songs. Others swear by their names. Parents name their children after leaders. The same is not true about Tigrayan ethno-nationalists. Any leader, who is not of Tigrayan origin must be discredited, vilified, and condemned as the enemy of the Tigrayan people. The defacing of streets in Addis Ababa named after Ethiopian leaders and patriots of Amhara origin is a testimony to hidden motives. The real motive of renaming the streets is to remove any symbol of Amhara leaders and patriots. But the destruction of any symbol of Ethiopia must take precedence before everything else so that anti-Ethiopian agenda of the Tigrayan regime can be enforced.

In fairness to Ethiopians who may be misled by the false accusations of Tewodros, Menelik, and Haile Selassie, the personality and excesses of Yohannes' reign must not be glossed-over, to borrow from Tecola's language. Since Tecola has no monopoly over the truth, his hollow rhetoric should not be accepted as fact. The power of brainwashing by repetition is illustrated in the case of Tecola Hagos' vicious personal smear. He believes his savagely cruel insinuation of Menelik as a common criminal and immoral; his characterization of Tewodros as drunkard, irrational, insane, etc would constitute a clever counter argument against Yohannes's collaborationist role and Meles' treason.

Tigrayan ethnocentric never fail to blame Menelik endlessly for real or imagined mistakes and his dealings with Italy for the purchase of arms to defend himself and his kingdom. But their memory betrays them when it comes to Yohannes' collaboration with the British in the overthrow of emperor Tewodros. Those errors are buried, forgotten, ignored and lied about. They want us to forget that part of Yohannes' duplicity while they perpetually talk about "Menelik's alleged "treason". The motives of Yohannes for enthusiastically putting himself at the service of British colonialist forces under Napier were both financial as well as material rewards. Professor Bahru explains: "***The British thus obtained most valuable support from Kassa Mercha of Tigre (the future emperor Yohannes IV), who ensured that the expeditionary force would be supplied with the provisions and the means to transport essential for its march, indeed, the expedition proved to be the first army in Ethiopian history which was prepared to pay for its food***"⁹³.

Tecola provided a lame excuse that Yohannes was young (as if 35 years old man is considered young) when he betrayed Tewodros. Nonetheless Kassa received his reward of six howitzers, six mortars and 850 muskets and rifles with ammunition, for the

⁹³ - Bahiru Zewdie, Modern History of Ethiopia, 1991

assistance he had provided, but his request for two or three British officers on loan for three months to train his people in the use of the guns was not granted⁹⁴.

Yohannes's collaboration with the British was costly to Ethiopia in terms of human lives lost during the battle and looted treasures. In an article dated Tuesday October 19, 2004 Terry Kirby, Chief Reporter for The Independent News Paper in U.K. wrote the following story about Ethiopian looted treasures found hidden in a British Museum basement.

“On a shelf in locked basement room underneath the British Museum, are kept 11 wooden tablets; they are covered in purple velvet. And no one among the museum’s staff - including Neil MacGregor; the director - is permitted to enter the room. In 1867, a British force was sent to Ethiopia to free hostages taken by Emperor Tewodros; after the defeat at the Battle of Magdala, he committed suicide. Extensive looting of the imperial treasures ensued and Richard Holmes, a museum curator sent specifically to locate items, obtained 80 objects taken by British soldiers; others found their way to the museum through bequests. As well as the tabots, the haul included ceremonial crosses, chalices, processional umbrella tops, textiles and jewelry. The Victoria & Albert Museum holds more than 50 items, including a gold crown, a chalice, a shield, a silver cross and the dress worn by the emperor’s widow, queen Terunesh. The British Library holds 350 manuscripts from Magdala. Other artifacts are held in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle and by the universities of Edinburgh and Cambridge, many remain in private hands”⁹⁵.

The historical record in the British archive reveals the following undisputable facts about Yohannes's collaboration.

“Robert Napier, the commander, paid money and weapons to Kassa Mercha, a Dejzmatch* of Tigray, in order to secure passage inland. On April 9 or 10, 1868, on the plateau of Argoi below Magdala (or Mek'dela, Magdela, Amba Maryam), British troops defeated the main imperial force. British and Indian battle losses are estimated at 29 wounded while the Abyssinians are believed to have suffered at least 500 killed and thousands wounded in the battle of Arogi. Soon afterwards, the British burned Magdala and left the country. Total Anglo-India losses are estimated in one source to number 400; total Abyssinian losses are estimated to be 1000⁹⁶”.

“The British and Dajzmach Kassa came to an agreement in which Kassa would let the British pass through Tigray (the British were going to Magdala which Tewodros had made his capital) in exchange for money and weapons. Surely enough, when the British completed their mission and were leaving the country, they rewarded Kassa for his

⁹⁴ - Holland and Hozier, Expedition, Vol. II, pp.94-6].

⁹⁵ - Terry Kirby, The Independent – Tuesday October 19, 2004

⁹⁶ - *How to Stop a War*; Ethiopia; Robert Napier; Tewodros II; Abyssinia 1868.

cooperation with artillery, muskets, rifles, and munitions, all in all worth approximately £500,000⁹⁷. This formidable gift came in handy when in July 1871 the current emperor, Emperor Tekle Giyorgis II, attacked Kassa at his capital in Adwa, for Kassa had refused to be named a ras or pay tribute⁹⁸. Although Kassa's army was outnumbered 12,000 to the emperor's 60,000, Kassa's army was equipped with more modern weapons and better trained. At battle's end, forty percent of the emperor's men had been captured. The emperor was imprisoned and would die a year later. Six months later, on 21 January 1872, Kassa became the new emperor under the name Yohannes IV⁹⁹ “

Margery Perham, in her book *The Government of Ethiopia*, gives the following accounts of Yohannes's personality :

“Kassa/Yohannis as ‘the monk and soldier’, weak in everything but ‘his fanatical hatred of Muslims and aversion from Roman Catholics’, representing ‘the old, aristocratic and religious Ethiopia’, and therefore by definition a reactionary or at least a conservative¹⁰⁰”.

Members of the British expedition had the following to say about Yohannes.

“The weak-minded Kassa went about with a sort of crown on his head, which was always coming down over his eyes, and gazed with stupid wonder at the rocket practice of the Naval Brigade. He is evidently a tool of the more powerful chiefs, whom accident has pitch forked into supreme power, and who may or may not be allowed to retain it; but in any case little good can be expected from so poor a creature¹⁰¹”.

In one of his dispatches to France and England, Muzinger, the vice-consul and acting consul at Massawa of both France and Britain, expressed a negative impression regarding Yohannes:

“Kassa was suspicious towards foreigners, unpopular among his own people in spite of his noble birth, inferior as a ruler to both Minilk and Gobeze. Whatever real power he held in 1868 had come to him as the result of lucky circumstances. Kassa's success over Tekle Giorgis in July 1871 was a victory ‘by sheer accident¹⁰²”.

By far the cruelest act of Yohannes was against his own brother-in-law Negus Takla-Giorgis. After the death of Emperor Tewodros, Tekle Giorgis of Lasta succeeded him

⁹⁷ - Marcus 2002, 71-72)

⁹⁸ - Harold Marcus, *The Life and Times of Emperor Menelik II – 1844 – 1913*

⁹⁹ - Bahiru Zewde, *History of Modern Ethiopia*, 2001

¹⁰⁰ - Margery Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia*, P. 52.

¹⁰¹ - Markham, *Abyssinia Expedition*, p.381

¹⁰² - Munzinger's dispatches, 29 Feb. August 1868

and assumed the throne. Yohannes, armed with British weapon and military advisor challenged Tekle Girogris. At the battle of Asam in 1871 Yohannes defeated Tekla Girorgis. After defeating and capturing Takla-Girogris of Lasta, the pious christian emperor. Yohannes gauged his brother-in-laws's eyes with hot iron and made him blind. In expressing her sorrow and grief, Yohannes's sister lamented:

የግዕዝ ባሕር ገዳዩ ወንድሜ
ከእንግዲህስ ወዲያ አልፎ ልግም እድሜ

The rough English translation of which is:

**The killer is my brother and the victim my husband
My sorrow is deep and within my household.**

While bad mouthing Menelik for not chasing Italians out of Eritrea, there is another episode that Tecola and cheerleaders never read or understood. That episode was Yohannes' failure to attack and dislodge Italians after he marched to Se'ati. Prof. Sven Rubenson writes, "*Yohannis first marched to Se'ati and then failed to attack and dislodge the Italians seriously compromised his leadership position. He lost the allegiance of Tekle Haymanot who was humiliated by his defeat and blamed the Emperor for having left him to face an overwhelming enemy alone*¹⁰³".

In order to weaken the position of Menelik, Yohannes began to support Adal (later known as king Teclehai-manot) as a counterweight to Menelik. Yohannes ordered Adal to go to Shoa and attack Menelik. Adal refused to attack Menelik unless he got help from Yohannes. When this policy failed and Adal decided to side with Menelik, Yohannes reacted by marching on Gojjam to punish Adal. Adal escaped and took refuge at Mutera Amba. "The emperor reacted by devastating Gojjam, the land of his relatively more favored vassal with a fury which he himself found hard to explain: "*I do not know whether it is through my sin or that of the peasant, but I went on devastating the country*¹⁰⁴".

A grieving Gojjame woman who saw the devastation expressed her sorrow and at the same time begged Yohannes to have mercy on Gojjam in the following manner:

¹⁰³ - Sven Rubenson, Survival of Ethiopian Independence

¹⁰⁴ - Bahru Zewde, p.45 and Belatan Geta Hiruy. P 83.