

# **A SOBERING LESSON: The Menilik Factor and the New Defeatism**

**“Alebabsew Biarsu Barem Yimelesu.”**

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## PART ONE

### I. Menilikism: Defeatism and Fatalism

A. General

B. Professor Messay Kebede [Ph. D.] and Menilikism

### II. Walking on a Slippery Slope and Misinterpreting Legal Concepts

A. Slippery Slope

B. Misinterpreting Legal and Ethical Concepts

C. What I Have Established in This Essay in Parts Two, Three, and Four

### III. The Mehale Sefaris and the Modernization (corruption) of Ethiopia

A. Background

B. Manipulating Political Power

C. Economic Concentration and Corruption

### Come-Back Effort

**Evidences and Historical document Treaties**  **33pages**

## PART ONE

### **I. Menilikism: Defeatism and Fatalism**

#### **A. General**

Let me start by suggesting that we Ethiopians should be extremely careful in choosing our national symbols. We are living in “interesting times,” as the Chinese would say to indicate a very difficult period in history. Ethiopia is standing on the edge of a precipice with deep gorges of disintegration on one side and fratricide war for power on the other. Any kind of symbol, though not that important on its own and in another period, may now illicit opposing and uncontrollable violent emotional outburst from Ethiopians. I caution that we refrain from elevating individuals from our past history to the statue of national symbols, specially those leaders who are controversial and polarizing, such as Menilik, Haile Selassie et cetera. We are better off if we use as national symbols abstract concepts of great ethical magnitude such as “Courage,” “Patriotism,” “Sacrifice,” “Truth” et cetera rather than historic figures who may not be acceptable to most of us. Such individuals may indeed have too many skeletons buried in history that may come to light if we try to use them as national symbols, with the result being discord and division.

I am bothered by the turn the little skirmish I have with my detractor is taking. It is diverting my attention and that of others away from our on-going political crises to

the extent that it has held me back from writing and engaging other Ethiopians in a discussion on a series of outstanding articles written by the Dissenters, former TPLF Politburo and Central Committee Members. The articles that have been posted in Deki-Alula Website are very timely as the only high-level-insider account of the problems the Dissenters were faced with within the Government of Meles Zenawi, the problem with the EPLF, the conflict and the war with “Eritrea,” the subversive role of the United States Government, the Algiers Agreement et cetera. So many questions to consider and so much educational material provided by the writers, but the absence of follow-up questions and comments suggest to me that we may not have recognized the seriousness of the material that is coming out of the pen of the Dissenters. We should be encouraging them to tell us more about the labyrinth within the bellies of two of the most secretive and most powerful political fronts in the history of Ethiopia.

What has happened in the last couple of months since my detractor posted his ambush article is a kind of surrogate fight against the current government by attacking me. The Mehale Sefaris are using this avenue of spurious attack on my person, and I playing in their eyes a role as a substitute for anthropomorphosized TPLF. The struggle for power is a pitched battle between the Mehale Sefaris and the Government in power and has nothing to do with the common people of Ethiopia, whose political and economic interest have been supplanted by “elites” and their political clubs. I happen to be a thorn pricking the sides of those two groups, for I am fighting for the common man of Ethiopia ever marginalized, ignored, and trampled upon by every dictator and would be leader of Ethiopia. No less hurtful is the behavior of Ethiopia’s educated men and women. Even though Ethiopia’s elite and educated class mostly come from peasants and semi-urbanized families of Ethiopia, the gulf they created between themselves and the rest of the community is astounding. The rigidity of protocol and hierarchical pecking-order would have made a great comedy if it were not painful to millions of Ethiopians, and it is both the cause and the result of Ethiopia’s deformity by “modernism” of the kind brought about by Haile Selassie and the Mehale Sefaris.

Meles Zenawi and his government more or less ignored my jabs and punches as would an elephant the bite of an irritating mosquito. However, with the Mehale Sefaris, my jabs and punches were too well aimed with a possible knock-out to ignore—thus the torrential insult from their hired-hands. I fight not for myself per se, but in protest and in rejection of the dehumanization of a great people by a few thousand Mehale Sefaris since the time of Emperor Menilik II. Even if it means I have to go against the entire world let alone against one exclusive Mafia-like group, I will do it over and over. Luckily, I am not alone in my defense of the voiceless people of Ethiopia. And this is an effort to restore some dignity and justice to a people whose suffering has been beyond description. I am one among several millions who stand against the Addis Ababa centered Mehale Sefari manipulation and grab of power. Ethiopia is never going back to the time of exploitation and absolute marginalization by the Mahale Sefaris and their opportunist appendages.

This essay is divided in four parts. In Part One (25 pages) I have discussed the defeatist philosophy of Messay Kebede, the esoteric views of my detractor on Ethiopian history and crime of treason; in Part Two (20 pages) my focus was on Emperor Tewodros and Kassa Mirtcha, and on the blue-print of Modern Ethiopia with emphasis on the leadership and sacrifices of Emperor Yohannes IV, and the myth of the threat of colonial ambition on Ethiopia; in Part Three (30 pages) I have concentrated on the deterioration and corruption of Ethiopia due to the slave trade and slavery introduced into Shoa by King Sahle Selassie and exasperated by King Menilik, with emphasis on the treasonous activities of Menilik before and after he became Emperor Menilik II; and in Part Four (20 pages) I wrote about the significance of the Peace Treaty of Paris (1947) and its relevance to our time. I have also scripted a reflective conclusion touching on several subjects and problems facing all of us Ethiopians.

I have gone to great length researching, verifying, and compiling a series of Treaties and Conventions signed by King Sahle Selassie and Emperor Menilik II, and I have attached herewith for the benefit of Ethiopians to help us all learn about the types of international relations entered by our past leaders often undermining our interest especially by Menilik. For comparison sake, in order to help you understand how a great leader would handle international relations, I have attached also the Adowa Treaty entered by Emperor Yohannes IV. I have no reason to doubt the authenticity of the documents I reviewed since they were compiled by responsible government functionaries at the time or near to the time those treaties and conventions were either signed or officially archived. Thus in my effort to answer to the wild accusations and unnecessary insults by my detractor and his Mehale Sefari supporters, as well as a handful of ebela bie Tygreans working behind the scene in the conspiratorial attack of my person, I ended up writing a small book (this essay). My apology for taking up so much of your time, but it is done in the best interest of all of us to know the truth.

I am a firm believer that no international treaty, convention, understanding, or instrument should be kept a secret from the people of Ethiopia except those very few treaties dealing directly with the purchase of defensive weapon and national security matters. For far too long, most Ethiopians including my detractors and critics had been arguing about the “greatness” of Emperor Menilik with their emotion and blind loyalty rather than having read all the Treaties and Conventions I have included herein signed by Menilik. Here is the time for Althea--reveling truth, not just academic “truth.” Alebabsew biarsu be arem yemelesu!

### **B. Professor Messay Kebede [Ph. D.] and Menilikism**

Even more alarming to me is the fact that this recent squabble has opened a fissure in our hitherto solid wall of patriotism [at least in articles posted in Websites] for Messay Kebede to sneak in his old thesis of defeatism and fatalism. Messay Kebede has restated his old thesis dealing with the acknowledgement by Ethiopia of its “defeat” by “Eritrea.” and that we sheenishlv ought to accept the illegal land-

grapping of our Territory by hostile governments. He advocates that we accept the fact of being a land-locked nation as something engraved in granite and as if the problem would freeze or stop there. It is to be recalled that he had previously stated that the effort, which was exerted to reverse the course that resulted in “land-locked Ethiopia,” was an effort by a few of us to undermine the Meles Government and to advance our own political ambition. At the time when such a statement was made, I did not respond because I had not read the article until much later. I was too busy working on the more important issue of helping draft a declaration to be submitted to the United Nations and a series of speeches dealing with the works of the Boundary Commission.

The most important point in Messay’s initial proposal as restated recently, if we just concentrate on the main idea setting aside his unnecessary accusations, has to do with the futility of continuing the effort to recover Ethiopia’s Afar Coastal territories (mainly Assab) because we will be wasting our time and effort that could be best used for other development purposes. He wrote in no uncertain term that Ethiopia was defeated by “Eritrea” and Ethiopia has no capacity to fight back. Such a statement coming from an “Eritrean” would have been a mild irritant, but from an Ethiopian, unbelievable! The statement other than the fact of its inaccuracy is also an insult to both living and dead defenders of the independence of Ethiopia. Moreover, the problem is not that simple as it sounds when reduced to such simplistic choice of shifting the real threat on Ethiopia’s continued existence as a nation to question of the direction of our development effort. We must recognize that having a coastal territory with a seaport is the single most important national security necessity and not mere developmental goal. If we submit to the assertions and demands of the new state of “Eritrea” and cede the Afar Coastal Territory, it sets bad precedent with long lasting national security and other political and economic adversity on Ethiopia. I will examine two extraordinarily serious and very obvious problems we have to deal with if we adopt Messay Kebede’s ideas.

**(1)** There will be no end to such collapsing of Ethiopian boundary and territory all the way to Addis Ababa from all angles once we submit to demands of that nature and cede what is so far legally and historically part of our Country. For Example, there is nothing to prevent one of the Afar “liberation” fronts/movements from putting similar demand, as the “Eritreans,” for the independence of Afar and demand all the land to the very heart of Ethiopia, to Ankobar and to the very foot of the Western Rift Valley mountain ranges. The Somalis could claim all of the land all the way to Debre Zeit. The Oromo movement could swallow up most of the Southern half of Ethiopia. Kenya could claim all of the Southern border regions of the Rift Valley Lakes. Sudan and Egypt would want all the land with Lake Tana and the whole of the Blue Nile River and River Basin. In other words, it is ridiculous to cede Ethiopian Territory to every bully who demands some Ethiopian territory, for we will be reduced to hoisting our flag from the top of a couple of buildings in Addis Ababa saved from the rest of ceded “Finfine.”

**(2)** The very idea of submitting to a demand made by a hostile party whether that

party identifies itself as a liberation movement, front, government et cetera is antithetical to the evidence of the history of the building of nations all over the world. In Ethiopia, political rebellion is not something new. In fact, I may even claim that it is a way of life, and our ancestors have withstood such turmoil and yet maintained the integrity of the Empire. However, what seems to be new these days in Ethiopia is this phenomenon of some “elites” who seem to think that nation building and maintaining a nation in freedom and independence is like a walk in a park. They argue against the use of force even in self defense; they uphold the extreme forms of self-determination [Wilsonian and Marxist] without considering the contextual underpinning why the idea was introduced; and they promote ethnic based autonomy et cetera. In short, their prescription is the way of the “saint,” which prescription is admirable, indeed, if we [human beings] all were living in a monastery. If one wants a nation, one has to fight for it. The precedent we are setting if we cede Ethiopian territory to anybody, would simply encourage more instability because we are sending the wrong message that says, “You can achieve political goals against Ethiopia through threat, intimidation, backed by raw power,” in bold letters. This type of defeatist approach denies the legitimate rights of the people thus affected by ceding Ethiopian territories the protection owed them by both the Ethiopian Government and their fellow Ethiopians.

The threat from Sudan and Egypt should never be undermined. The interest of those two countries is no less than the complete annihilation of Ethiopia or the reduction (alienation) of the territories of Ethiopia to such an extent that Ethiopia cannot be considered a viable nation. The interest of Egypt and Sudan in their eyes is a matter of survival, for they believe as expressed by their leaders in history as well as in our own time that Ethiopia holds their very survival in its hands because it is the source of almost all of the waters of the White Nile and the Blue Nile that finally reach the Mediterranean Sea. A nation that wields such natural control by the mere fact of geography need be feared. Thus the animosity is not a question of liking or disliking between people, but an issue far more primordial—an issue of survival. Thus, the lesson that is just unfolding in the genocide being committed by the Sudan Government against two distinct minority groups of the Darfur Moslems and the Southern Christians is a warning lesson for Ethiopians. The history of the same genocidal group who controlled the government of the Sudan now tells us that they were the same ancestors of the people who repeatedly attacked Ethiopia lead by the Mahdi in the 19th Century. My concern about the power structure of the Sudan is not at all an exaggeration, but born with verifiable historical incident in our recent and distant past. Nevertheless, I must also point out a most unusual attitude between the ordinary citizens of these three nations, Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia, with so much shared history. The fact of the matter is that the people of these three nations actually like each other, which I find most unusual. It is, in fact, most touching when members of these ancient people meet by chance in any of the European or American cities or towns, their meetings almost in every instance is joyous and a recognition of a long lost family member than that of an enemy. This is also true with Somalis. I cannot explain it, but it is a fact that I cherish that I am afraid to turn and look else where for fear of losing it.

I believe that Messay Kebede in holding such views of appeasement has no other agenda [hidden or otherwise] that I know of except his interest to promote the future development of Ethiopia, albeit based on totally wrong assumptions and theories. Moreover, it is very possible that he may be subliminally defending or preserving the interest of Addis Ababa based elites and the Mehale Sefaris. I do not believe that Messay Kebede deliberately wants to hurt any Ethiopian. I recognize also that the sub-text of his argument, which I understand deeply, to be his concern that if Ethiopia is engaged in a prolonged war with “Eritrea,” we might even lose far more than we could ever gain from the Afar Coastal Territories because such prolonged war will further weaken the bonds that exist now among “ethnic” groups and will result in total disintegration of Ethiopia. Sadly, such fear is misplaced and did not take into account that the sword of war has two edges, and in as much as it cuts on this side, it also cuts on the other side. The resources of “Eritrea” and the internal ethnic diversity are not much different than that of Ethiopia. [The probable Arab interference and financing of Eritrea may add to the urgency and gravity of the problem, but can be effectively neutered.] Leaders understand that very well. What leaders look for in conflicts of this nature is a sign of weakness in the resolve of the opposition. The existence of such weakness is the triggering point for aggressive behavior of the leaders of a nation. Thus, it is the wrong approach now to show any hesitation or doubt about the courage and commitment of the Ethiopian people to preserve our national integrity. What I hope for is that the people of both parties will realize the futility of prolonged war, for no one will win since we all face similar dangers of a far profound nature and devastation: problems of over population, famine, pestilence of every kind, civil war et cetera. It is time to set aside this foolishness of separation and animosity and come together as one people and one nation.

Nevertheless, it is not the first time that people with good intentions, such as Messay Kebede, have made terrible mistakes. Thus, my comment on Messay Kebede’s opinion is simply a matter of my national duty to warn fellow Ethiopians the danger in adopting any of Messay’s ideas. For Ethiopians to be perceived weak, particularly at this point, is to confirm to the enemies of Ethiopia what they suspected to be the case is indeed the case. At any rate, since we are surrounded by states that want nothing less than our total destruction, there should be no divergent views when it comes to the defense of the national security, territorial integrity, and Sovereignty of Ethiopia.

The recovery of our Coastal Territories is a must, and we must work for the reintegration of our brothers and sisters of “Eritrea” for our mutual benefit as our long term goal. Our guiding principle must not be geared toward hurting “Eritrea” but toward understanding and how best we can help each other survive this tumultuous period and look to our future unity. These ideas and goals are not contradictory but complementary. It is not possible to have peace and development in the area with Ethiopia being deprived of its Afar Coastal Territories and people. In fact, the first step toward peace and mutually beneficial cooperation is for everybody

to recognize that fact of land locking of Ethiopia is in itself a destabilizing factor, and the leaders of the United States Government and those of the European nations must desist from interfering. In the 1999 war with “Eritrea,” we have already experienced the insurmountable difficulty to get new supply of weapon and humanitarian shipments because of being landlocked. We know how Djibouti inflated its fees and charged the Ethiopian government exorbitant amount of money for transit of goods during the conflict with Eritrea and after to this day. Ceding Ethiopian territory to every bully on the block, I am sure, is not acceptable to most Ethiopians.

When I reflect on such proposals, such as the one by Messay Kebede, I see a clear parallel between such defeatist proposals, the historic treasonous activities of Menilik, and the willingness of the new children of Menilik who are now promoting the idea to sacrifice the periphery to preserve the core that is Addis Ababa and the Mehale Sefaris at the center of power. I do not mean to suggest that both Menilik and Messay Kebede have similar goals. Nevertheless, such thesis was the same policy alternative Meles Zenawi brought into the TPLF’s Central Committee debate, and later as part of his propaganda to bolster his decision to end abruptly the war and accept a one-sided disastrous Algiers Agreement, whereby he pointed out scornfully the patriotic acts of past Ethiopian Emperors, such as Tewodros and Yohannes losing their lives in defense of Ethiopia as examples of foolishness.

May I remind my fellow Ethiopians, about one of the most disconcerting but universal law of nature: weakness in an animal attracts predators of all sizes. Being mild mannered or peaceful in the face of actual danger may provide temporary relief, but like all acts of appeasement one pays with total disaster in its wake. Building a nation is not a game where you give some and take some and everything settles down to a nice and neat system. It is not like building sand-castles where you can endlessly improvise—building and demolishing over and over with no real pain or suffering. The absurdity of such concession of territories and abandoning of citizens is shown clearly by a writer who stated that it would be wise to compromise and let go of the Afar Ethiopian Coastal Territories and recover such area later than to fight for the integrity of Ethiopia during tough times. It seems people have not learned the lesson of history that the fight for the territorial integrity of Ethiopia is not just for “territory” or a piece of “real-estate,” but for the human and political rights of precious Ethiopian citizens who live in those territories. After all, who would have the arrogance and the folly to decide that a particular group of Ethiopians are disposable and could be thrown out for political expediency? It is incredible to me that few individuals incased in Addis Ababa, and their supporters living abroad without any degree of shame would argue that they will sacrifice a part of Ethiopia in order to save the “independence” of Ethiopia i.e., themselves. Such presumptuous attitude, simply put, assumes that the life of some Ethiopians is worth less compared to others. It also accords to such individuals a right to allocate or deny Ethiopian citizenship and ancestral homes as they please. This is disgusting. If there is anyone who ought to be rounded up and removed from Ethiopia, it is such individuals and Mehale Sefaris and not the people of Afar. Irob. or Kunama.

## **II. Walking on a Slippery Slope and Misinterpreting Legal Concepts**

### **A. Slippery Slope**

I am always mindful of the slippery slope an individual walks on when defending and applauding feudal Kings and Emperors of Ethiopia. Too often naive and overly ambitious individuals fall into such a trap--defending the indefensible, praising the despicable, and edifying the inconsequential. Specially when such individuals add lies to their fantastic accreditation of superior legacy of benevolence and social concerns to such feudal Ethiopian Kings and Emperors, they are participating in the spinning of yarns of false history and fable rather than the preservation of the more sobering and enlightening truth. We know that, in general, our leaders, through out our history, have been too self-centered, brutal, and a drag on the advancement of the people of Ethiopia. The Emperors and Kings of Ethiopia, almost with very limited exceptions, had waged numerous battles and wars purposefully to loot, destroy, and punish their subjects thereby leading us to our current predicament of poverty and downward spiraling moral deterioration.

Of course, there were exceptional Emperors who were praise worthy, such as Amede Tsion and Sertse Dengel who spent almost all their lives on horsebacks expanding and creating a great Empire the breadth and width of Ethiopia, Zera Yacob who restructured and reformed the administrative structure of the Empire, Tewodros and Yohannes who gave us a blue-print of Modern Ethiopia, and Haile Selassie who was unique in a number of ways and a self made man. There is nothing wrong in praising leaders who deserve such praise and recognition on specific acts of heroism, intelligence, generosity et cetera. In the past, I myself have praised Ethiopian Emperors, but always in context and in comparison to the activities of their contemporaries elsewhere in the world on moral issues, heroism, and intellect, and less on their governance and civic leadership qualities. If praise be the order of the day, then the one institution that truly deserves our unanimous admiration, for it steadfastly maintaining the unity and humanity of Ethiopia, is the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian Church. Of course, its singular service to the people of Ethiopia came at great cost and with the sacrifice of its clergy and leaders who have been used and abused by Ethiopian political leaders in their effort to advance their secular ambitions.

We just did not choose to be the poorest and the most disease infested nation on Earth. We were forced into such state of affairs by centuries of violence and the incompetence of our leaders. Yes, European colonizers, and Ottomans and Arabs did contribute to our problems, but their participation leading to our current situation is marginal compared to the monumental harm done to our nation especially in the last one hundred fifty years by our own leaders and their sycophantic retainers like the members of the Mehale Sefaris. The little skirmish of the last two months supposedly on the issue of Menilik was only a smock screen for a far more selfish, insidious, and personal reasons of a handful of individuals who are really of no consequences despite the fact that they tried to project super patriotism by attacking



me. However, there is a great lesson to be learned from all that: some Ethiopian “elites” would do anything for recognition and political power—the very same thing I have found objectionable in Menilik and many other Ethiopian leaders.

A word of caution to my detractors, in an effort to attack me, let us not go overboard painting Ethiopian Emperors with glowing colors, specially Menilik, as the epitome of generosity and great leadership advancing the welfare of Ethiopians because such a picture is an illusion. For millions of Ethiopians, Menilik is the cause of great suffering, humiliation, brutality, and destruction. Very often some Ethiopian intellectuals and foreign historians depict Menilik as the architect of the battle of Adowa. To begin with it was his own action of selling out Ethiopian territory and people to the Italians in exchange for money and weapon that gave the Italians a beachhead to launch their war of aggression and expansion that led to the battle of Adowa. I have attached herewith incontrovertible evidence in treaties signed by Menilik to show beyond doubt Menilik’s treason and betrayal of the People of Ethiopia.

I have with me over thirty E-mail correspondences from my detractor to disprove all the allegations made against me by my detractor. The same person over a period of two years, had consistently expressed the fact that he worshiped the very ground I walked on, how he considered himself my student, and how he wished if only “there were a thousand Tecolas” for Ethiopia sake. His hyperbolic admiration of almost everything I wrote except the last one [Henze article] before he unleashed the unprovoked torrent of insults stands as a reminder to me and my friends that we really have not learned much from the horror of the last thirty years of political and economic turmoil. The shift in attitude of that same individual is quite jarring. So much for Ethiopian brotherhood!

### **B. Misinterpreting Legal and Ethical Concepts**

My detractor had accused me of not being astute enough to ask further whether Menilik entered into agreement with Italy “with the aim of harming Ethiopia or out of necessity...to save Ethiopian independence by sacrificing a part of Ethiopian territory.” I must point out the fact that the establishment of “intent” in criminal cases is distinct from those in civil actions. The complexity is due to the variation in standard of proof in different acts where the showing of intent is required. However, in our discussion of the activities of Menilik to demand a showing of “aim of harming Ethiopia” is pure sophistry and misleading. What my detractor is trying to insert in the debate is a standard of “intent” called in legal jargon “specific intent” that would make any finding of guilt in such types of crimes of treason, espionage, collaboration et cetera impossible. As I shall show herein no court in any legal system uses such pure and extremely restrictive concept of “specific intent” in cases of treason, espionage, et cetera.

Menilik is no ordinary criminal, he was first the King of Shoa, a vassal to the Emperor of Ethiopia. and after the death of Emperor Yohannes IV. Menilik became

Emperor of Ethiopia wielding absolute power. We have to hold him to a much higher standard of responsibility than any private citizen accused of treason to be tried in a court of law. Menilik must be judged in the court of public opinion, as well as in an imagined court of law. My detractor seems to think that the treason and betrayal committed by Menilik was limited to one single act. That is not so, for Menilik committed treason several times from 1882 to the day he died in 1913. During such long period he committed treason not only against Ethiopia but also against his liege master Emperor Yohannes. The question I have asked is sufficiently clear and relevant for establishing that the activities of Menilik were treasonous activities. It is of no value asking the type of question my detractor is insisting on as if such a question is the only key to show the inner workings of the mind of Menilik.

The question of “aim of harming Ethiopia” is not the issue, but the culpability or the consequent harm that flowed directly from the activities of Menilik due to selling Ethiopian territory and abandoning Ethiopian subjects to a fate no less than slavery is. At any rate, even if we adopt my detractors strenuous test, which is a disputed idea involving treason charges against an ordinary citizen wherein the standard to be used maybe what is called “specific intent,” it is not difficult to show in the case of Menilik that Menilik had the mens rea and the “specific intent” to harm Emperor Yohannes and by derivation Ethiopia. For example, no one asks a thief on trial whether he intended to harm the owner by his theft; it is sufficient to find whether he has the mens rea and the intent to take property that is not his own, and has intended to deprive the owner of his possession in order to establish that the thief is not merely borrowing, for example, constructed from his intent to possess an item that is not his, and also not having permission to possess the item.

If we consider for example the United States legal system, which has far more restrictive approach on questions of “intent” compared to Civil Law legal systems, the Supreme Court and Federal lower courts have dealt with the issue in a manner that I can cite for comparison and analogy for the purpose of this discussion. In *Cramer v. United States*, 325 U.S. 1, 45 (1945) the Court countering or providing a process for the showing of “specific intent” stated that one may “assume that every man to intend the natural consequences which one standing in his circumstance and possessing his knowledge would reasonably expect to result from his acts.” Further more, in another case *Kawakita v. United States*, 343 U.S. 717, 742 (1952) the Court held that “intent may be inferred from the overt act.” In case of Menilik, we could infer “specific intent” to harm Yohannes and derivatively harm Ethiopia too from Menilik’s signing of treaties and accepting money from the Italian government. In other words, one need not show that Menilik intended to harm Ethiopia per se; it is sufficient to know that the consequence of his willful acts would harm Ethiopia. The fact is Menilik’s action did harm Ethiopia to this day.

There is even a concept of constructive fraud where mens rea/criminal intent [a more sophisticated legal analysis would make a distinction between mens rea and “intent”] of what ever form is not even relevant. The harm in such instance is the consequence of the willful act of the criminal not his “intent to harm.” Thus my detractor

borrowing a concept from criminal law willy-nilly ought not to polarize the issue of the treachery or betrayal and the ceding of Ethiopian territory and the abandoning of Ethiopians to colonialism by Menilik. Treason, spying, and betrayal are political based activities the former two being criminal acts and the last one being the moral wrong that maybe one of the underlying objectionable characteristics of the acts of treason or spying. Much more so than any other common criminal act, circumstantial evidence and weighing of consequences subsequent to an act, such as alienating national sovereignty and territorial integrity as Menilik did, is the central evidentiary ingredient on question of treason. One much related crime to treason is spying and passing documents or information of a government by one of its employees to another government even a friendly one. There are numerous cases and legal articles that clearly state that “intent to harm” is not a requirement to establish guilt. Nevertheless, there is sufficient reason to believe that Menilik intended to harm Emperor Yohannes if one insists on the showing of “specific intent.”

It is sufficient for a finding of guilt, as I stated earlier, that the mens rea or the criminal mind to pass unauthorized government information to an enemy or even a friendly government is the required "intent" and not "the aim of harming" Ethiopia. Whether the spy intended to harm his government or help it, or is indifferent in no way is to be used as legal requirement in showing “intent” in such crimes. Otherwise we will end up in a ridiculous situation of trying to establish the type of “intent to harm” defense of my detractor. In Menilik’s situation, the establishment of intent for signing all those treasonous treaties can be done by close scrutiny of Menilik’s activities. No one can have a direct access to the mind of any individual of our own time let alone a dead one for a century. My detractor by changing the focus of our inquiry from that of examining circumstantial evidence to the reading of Menilik’s mind to establish “intent to harm” is inviting us to enter the mind of a long dead person--a very dishonest and desperate attempt of a person trying to change the outcome of an honest inquiry into the activities of a treasonous Emperor.

Nothing short of actual recording of Menilik’s voice declaring “I Menilik intend to harm Emperor Yohannes and Ethiopia by ceding Ethiopian territory to Italy,” would satisfy the standard of evidence thus set by my detractor. Such is the absurdity of his argument. And defying long standing practice of evidentiary processes, my detractor would be denying the use of circumstantial evidence, or proper inference drawn thereof if we adopt his concept of intent. I being mindful of long standing rules of evidence, acceptable in both common and civil law systems, on circumstantial and documentary evidence, it is sufficient for me using the activities of Menilik to establish the following: 1) the fact that Menilik willfully without being harassed or coerced entered into several Treaties with Italy; 2) Menilik’s motive for entering those treaties were personal and selfish motives to overthrow Yohannes and become Emperor, and to make sure to keep the Tygrean challengers to his Crown remain incapacitated, divided, and under the control of a friendly third party albeit a colonial power; and 3) the consequence of Menilik’s action actually caused harm to Emperor Yohannes and Ethiopians and diminished the territorial size of Ethiopia. The harm that Ethiopians suffered was the direct consequence of Menilik’s action.

To ask whether Menilik intended to harm Ethiopia by his treason and betrayal is not a proper question and confuses “specific intent” standard to establish existence of a guilty mind and meant to curb overreaching or lumping all kinds of simple crimes as treason in earlier English and Continental cases, with the modern concept of limiting such requirements. More so in Civil Law systems than is the case with Common Law system “specific intent” is not the test used for the showing of guilt. My detractor simply did not take into account the simple fact of the nature of Menilik’s activities and how it fits in the two legal systems. A prudent examination by me or anyone else ought to focus on the activities of Menilik that spans the period since he became King of Shoa to his death, what types of gains he derived from his actions, whether there could be found reasonable alternative explanations for Menilik’s actions, whether there are contradictions in my analysis/synthesis et cetera.

The Ethiopian Penal Code of 1957, which is structured in the same way as the Swiss Penal Code with almost identical provisions dealing with culpability and treason, does not use the “intent to harm” or “specific intent” or “aim to harming” criteria to establish guilt or culpability. It is more in line with “consequence” derived from the “overt act” based system as in the case of the Civil Law system, as well as the more restrictive Common Law system as in the case of the United States legal approach to treason. In Part I of the Ethiopian Penal Code is laid out the general principle on criminal intention. Art 58 (1) holds that “... Criminal intention exists also when the offender being aware that his act may cause illegal and punishable consequences, commits the act regardless that such consequences may follow.” This refers to the principle that is identified in Common Law system as *actus reus*. In Common Law there are six identifiable distinctions between types of “intent.” In the Special Part, Part II of the Penal Code, Book III, Title I deals with offences against the State [of Ethiopia]. In Article 249 it is clearly stated that “[w]hosoever attempts to overthrow the Emperor or to break or modify the order of succession to the Throne, by violence, threats, conspiracy or other unlawful means, is punishable with rigorous imprisonment from five years to life, or in cases of exceptional gravity, with death.” If this was the law during the time of Yohannes, Menilik would have been clearly condemned to death for his treasonous activities.

There is no “specific” even “general” intent requirement “to harm” Ethiopia in the Ethiopian Penal Code Article 261- High Treason provision – in order to establish the crime of treason. Under Article 261 there is no requirement to show “aiming to harm Ethiopia” for an accused to have committed treason. It is sufficient to establish treason by showing that the accused has taken up arms or engages in hostile acts against Ethiopia or had dealings with the enemy, or keeping up of correspondence, et cetera for the “purpose of ensuring or promoting the enemy’s success.” [Emphasis added] No requirement to show “intent” to harm Ethiopia! Even more clearly, the same consequence-oriented approach is used in Article 264 dealing with “Collaboration.” The fact is that “intention” used in these provisions is considered only in the direction of the enemy to establish the *mens rea* in helping the enemy succeed, as pointed out in so many words by Article 264 thus “[w]hosoever enjoying Ethiopian nationality or being officially entrusted with the protection of Ethiopian

national interest, in time of war or of occupation of the territory of the Empire, helps the enemy with advice or by deed, thereby intentionally favoring the enemy.” Thus “the intent to harm Ethiopia” standard, my learned detractor was trying to pass as a legitimate argument, is nowhere used as a requirement to establish treason. This exercise (essay) is simply meant to show that certain legal principles are complex and should not be used to confuse political discussions by bringing in some borrowed solemnity from jurisprudence or the law. I do not mean to try someone by a “Code” provision about fifty years in his future. The fact is that if Menilik were tried during his own time, he would have been found guilty of treason against his Emperor and his Country.

If my detractor had been as proficient in the law as his loose tongue/pen is, he would have raised the more convincing defense or question of the immunity and non-justiciable nature of the act of a sovereign i.e., executive immunity of a head of state. However, even such argument may not vindicate the treasonous activities of Menilik since the act being protected by that form of immunity is aimed at legitimate acts in the interest of the nation not about actions that are in effect destructive of the very state that is granting the immunity to its head of state. For example, the French Constitution as last amended on 26 July 1995 in Article 68 (1) provides immunity for the President of France “for actions performed in the exercise of his office except in the case of high treason.” It is a well established concept in law and in political philosophy that Sovereignty resides in the People as signified in the State.

### **C. What I Have Established in This Essay in Parts Two, Three, and Four**

I have established in this essay beyond a shadow of doubt that Menilik negotiated and sold off Ethiopian territory starting way before the Wutchale Treaty and the subsequent Treaties of delimitation after the Battle of Adowa were signed, and had received money and weapon as consideration or “incentive” as far back as the early 1880s in total amounting nearly twenty million (20,000,000) lire. To understand the magnitude of the payment to Menilik, consider the fact that the price of an ox was about two or three dollars of the period. The twenty million lire may have been worth a billion dollars in its purchasing power of goods and services of the time. I have further established from the history of European colonial powers of the time that there was no threat to Menilik or to Ethiopia by any colonial power except Italy during that period of time. I have shown also the motive for Menilik’s betrayal of Emperor Yohannes IV, when Menilik was King of Shoa, to be a desire to be Emperor of Ethiopia. And later Menilik further betrayed the people of Ethiopia after he became Emperor simply for selfish personal interest to maintain his Crown by diminishing the capacity of his Northern challengers by selling off their ancestral homeland and abandoning the people to Italy even after Italy was defeated with no capacity to counter attack the Ethiopian Army.

I have often read articles, listened to arguments, and participated in discussions where the basic documentary evidence substantiating any of the assertions in such interactions are never cited or indicated. The problem is that most ‘elite’ Ethiopians

whom I know are lazy; they hardly read a book a week or a month. Their scholarship is shoddy, half-hearted, and more of rhetorical posturing more than a decent search for the truth. In most instances, they have not read the Treaties or historical documents they are discussing. Whether it is my detractor or the Mehale Sefaris do not seem to have read most of the treaties and international instruments that I have attached, prior to their diatribe. I am not being fastidious, but very disappointed and very tired of having to do first hand research all the time because no one else has taken the trouble to research and write on so many important and relevant subject matters concerning Ethiopia and Ethiopians. Take, for example, the trouble I have to go through to get the Treaties and Conventions I have attached with this article. There is not a single index on international agreements Ethiopia has signed over the Century. No biographical work on King Haile Meleket or King Sahle Selassie or social studies of the period worth reading. I have no idea what all those credentialed Ethiopians do year in year out. I want to register here my disappointment about Ethiopian “elites” and risk their anger than just let this national tragedy fester evermore.

Thus the rest of this essay is devoted to the presentation of detailed information about Menilik, the roles played by different Ethiopian leaders since the 1840s relevant to my narrative, and copies of several relevant documents. The attached copies of the Treaties signed by Ethiopian Emperors Yohannes and Menilik with colonial Western powers are authentic copies from sources that compiled the Treaties very close to the time the Treaties were signed. I have no reason to doubt their veracity. The contrast between the two Ethiopian Emperors Yohannes and Menilik is disconcerting and stark clear. What is particularly disappointing to me is to realize that an African man would betray his own people with such level of eagerness with which Menilik bargained off Ethiopian territory and subjects for temporary gains either political or pecuniary. We Ethiopians need no illusion. We need to face the reality of our past in our current lives and save ourselves from holding such a treasonous individual as our hero.

We need to confront those ugly truths of oppression, exploitation, dehumanization, and betrayal by our leaders. The only way we maybe able to create an Ethiopia that is not shrouded with lies and the bloody activities of selfish leaders is by confronting our past and the misdeeds of our leaders. Ethiopia is never going back to the time of Menilik, Haile Selassie, Mengistu or anybody else where a handful of Mehale Sefaris have had a free hand in manipulating our patriotic zeal to serve their selfish agenda in staying in power at the cost of all the people of Ethiopia! All the rattling of saber does not diminish the fact that my detractor seems to have been caught in his own web of lies and misrepresentations.

### **III. The Mehale Sefaris and the Modernization (corruption) of Ethiopia**

#### **A. Background**

Let me make it absolutely clear here, I am not a friend or “alter ego” of Meles Zenawi. or supporter of his Government. It would be very presumptuous of me to

even think of such “distinguished” role. Meles Zenawi is a leader of a State/Nation no matter what I may have to say about him or his Government. Irrespective of my low opinion of his activities and leadership, the fact remains that he is a world figure, a Prime Minister, and a very rich man. By contrast I am a private person, with no public title, and leading a modest existence. The problem I have with my detractor and his supporters, the Mehale Sefaris, is not with their desire to change the current Ethiopian Government, but with the “symbol” and rhetoric adopted for that purpose and their lack of vision. Menilik is the wrong symbol, he is no hero at all but a common treasonous, divisive, immoral, and corrupt leader who remains to this day the very cause of our present economic and political problems. The Mehale Sefaris who are now trying to identify themselves with the Amhara people from Wollo, Gondar, Gojjam, and in most areas in Shoa are the same interest-group who had scorned, dehumanized, disfranchised, and brutally oppressed the Amhara people from the provinces identified here and the rest of the Ethiopian people everywhere in all parts of Ethiopia during the last one hundred years from the time of Menilik through the fifty years of Haile Selassie’s Reign.

To personalize the serious issues and thesis I am discussing in this article and several others, as my detractors and the Mehale Sefaris have tried to do in their articles, is not helpful to anyone. The personalized attack of me by my detractor and his Mehale Sefari patrons of the last two months did not help them refute my ideas nor did they come up with anything worth while except to repeat the same historical lies in thousand different ways. One of such lies is the allegation that I am a hatemonger and hate Mehale Sefaris personally. Nothing could be further from the truth than that type of assertion. The fact is that I have great admiration for the tenacity, single-mindedness, focus, and goal oriented activities of the Mehale Sefaris. How I wish they have used such talent to benefit us all rather than to perpetuate their manipulative control on all of us. Hate is an emotional degenerating handicap; I have no such deformity. There is no way that I could hate a whole group of Ethiopians and yet proclaim with such enthusiasm how proud I am about our history. I am not a simple minded demagogue who finds answers in simple slogans, but seeks out the complexity of events in our past. I criticize the Mehale Sefaris not in the nature of personal hate but as a group and a system that has been the one single moving force that had completely emasculated Ethiopians from advancing and leading a better life.

The members of the Mehale Sefaris in articles and letters have accused me of making divisive categories out of “Amharas” by identifying people as Wolloies, Gonderes, Gojjames et cetera. My detractor accuses me of reducing the political problem in Ethiopia as if it is a conflict between Tygreans and Shoans. On both counts, I did no such thing. I have made it absolutely clear that I prefer the old provincial administrative system, and it is in that tradition I talk about Wolloies, Gonderes et cetera. At any rate, was there a time ever in any of the reigns of the Emperors and Empress for the last one hundred years an “Amhara” solidarity? The new call of Amhara solidarity was started as a very negative political agenda by the brutal Mengistu Hailemariam when he was confronted with stiff resistance by

rebellion groups from Tygrei and Eritrea that he resorted to such cheap divisive propaganda to mobilize one ethnic group against Tygreans. No matter how they may have misled a number of Ethiopians, the goal of the Mehale Sefaris is exactly the same as that of Mengistu's failed attempt to create an ethnic based hatemongers to attack Tygreans.

Nevertheless, what is most remarkable is the wisdom and foresight of the people of Ethiopia: the Arisis, the Gonderes, the Gojjames, the Shewes, the Hareres, the Oromos of Wolega, and the Wolloies in particular, in identifying that the political problem of Ethiopia transcends ethnicism and is systemic. Furthermore, most Ethiopians have become very much aware of the scheme of the Mehale Sefaris manipulation for decades and how they used the political situation in Ethiopia to perpetuate their hold on power. Ethiopians have become increasingly aware of those Mehale Sefaris who created ethnic based war of hate against Tygreans or Oromos or anybody who does not submit to their manipulation to acquire political and economic power at the coast of the rest of Ethiopians. For example, for the last thirteen years the Mehale Sefari backed oppositions under different names had relentlessly campaigned to turn Ethiopians not only against the Government of Meles Zenawi but also against Tygreans in general accusing ordinary Tygreans from blind support of the TPLF to being the only beneficiaries of the change from the overthrow of the fascist government of Mengistu. The reality, of course, shows that the Mehale Sefaris are now controlling the political and economic situation in Ethiopia with Meles Zenawi as their tool as they had done with all past Ethiopian leaders from the time of Menilik. Wodet tega, tega?

I really do not need extraordinary evidence to show that the Mehale Sefari controlled political system anchored first for few years at Ankober and moved to a new site, with the foundation of the City of Addis Ababa on 26 November 1886, has failed us Ethiopians completely. Mehale Sefaris have succeeded in creating monstrous political and economic deformities. I have spent several years studying the significant role played by Mehale Sefaris and the City of Addis Ababa (and vicinity) in creating and worsening the current destructive political and social condition specially the current economic situation and moral deterioration of Ethiopia. [I refer you to my recent article posted in this Website "Tecla Hagos Responds: Part One: Beyond Ethnicism: Molding the New Ethiopia.] The way the destruction of the great feudal houses around Ethiopia was carried out by the Mehale Sefaris is worthy of a Machiavelli.

The condition of the nation after the death of Tewodros was very favorable and open for a new group of individuals not encumbered with family relationships with any of the Great Houses of Lasta, Begemder/Semien, Gondar, Gojjam, Tigrei, Wollo, Afar et cetera to pursue a coherent and single goal oriented consolidation of power. The original Mehale Sefaris, who were the retainers of Menilik were drawn from the vast population of "slaves" and "domestics" of Sahle Selassie, who have by then settled in Ankober and surrounding areas and have become integrated and formed the inner circle of Menilik. [One cannot find very many Mehale Sefaris in Menz's land



holding structure because Menz and few other areas were settled areas before Sahle Selassie infused Shoa specially Ankober area with vast number of “slaves” and Menilik benefited and further expanded the system. Thus the land holdings of the Mehale Sefaris are usually in Ankober and surrounding areas and newly acquired land further into the South.]

The Mehale Sefaris first step was the effective marginalization of Menzes and all aristocratic and noble aspirants. Menz and Efrata represented the Shoa Amhara lineage of ancient Ethiopia both aristocratic and communal after the devastation caused by the legendary Yodit and the dispersal or exile of the Solomonic dynasty from Axum in the first Millenium. Their next step was to destroy the power base of the many Great Houses out of which leaders come from, by undermining the history and pride of the diverse people of Gojjam, Gondar, Lasta/Wollo, Tygrei, et cetera. By the time we come to the end of Emperor Haile Selassie’s era, no one from those areas would speak with pride about their great ancestors who were the very people who created the State of Ethiopia thousands of years before any Mehale Safari ever set foot in Ethiopia. The Mehale Sefaris in a very subtle but effective manner promoted the idea that Ethiopia and its people had a history only of less than a hundred years, a history that started with the reign of Menilik II and reaching its zenith during the reign of Haile Selassie. They implanted the seed that only their leadership stands between modernity or backwardness. Backwardness meant everything that is not centered in Addis Ababa.

The period after the death of Tewodros was a time for great secrecy and commitment to one leader. If there was any division of interest in Shoa after the death of Tewodros, as was the case in Tygrei, Gondar, and Wollo/Lasta, there would have been very serious consequences. Shoa was the most vulnerable domain without leadership, and would have fallen apart with contending small holdings of Chekashumes and eventually would have been swallowed up either by Wollo or Gojjam. It is the uniqueness of the Mehale Sefaris identity that also preserved their unity in the service of one man related to them at least on his mother’s side. No one else in the rest of Ethiopia had such close connection with the Mehale Sefaris. Of course, over the years during the long reign of Menilik some form of relationship was formed through marriage from Arisi, Wollega, Wollo, Gondar, Gojjam, and to a limited extent Tygrei. Nevertheless the fact of not being related to a number of communities around Ethiopia made the Mehale Sefaris very defensive and extremely loyal to each other. I believe it is this unique background of the Mehale Sefaris that is antithetical to democratic pluralism for our time. The fear of that period has metamorphosized into a system of government and social reality such that the Mehale Sefaris believe that Ethiopia as a nation cannot survive unless the Mehale Sefaris are in control.

### **B. Manipulating Political Power**

The trend of flocking to Addis Ababa of local feudal leaders from the “Provinces” or the “Administrative Regions” abandoning the ordinary farmers and small traders of

their constituents was the first step toward the unhealthy concentration of political and economic power in Addis Ababa. Such trend had caused two further distortions: 1) it allowed the consolidation of the power of the Mehale Sefaris at great loss to local leadership, and 2) it created a mirage of an ethnically diverse power-sharing political system thereby creating false impression of a sharing of power by diverse groups or ethnic members. [It is that same illusion that tempted Dr. Marcos Lemma to go to the extent of writing the genealogy of Ethiopian officials during the time of Haile Selassie, Mengistu, et cetera; a useful effort on its own, but not dispositive for the purpose intended for by Marcos Lemma or any body else who tend to simplify the complexity of Ethiopia's Government power structure by pointing out the genealogy of functionaries. This may have to do with confused understanding between the sources of political power and its manifestations.] The point of my thesis is that pre-Menilik Ethiopia had a defused and heroic social tradition, but during Menilik's reign and after was drastically changed by increasingly concentrating both political and economic power in the hands of a conspiratorial, exclusive, Mafia-like group whose initial members had nothing to do with "Amhara" ethnicity or culture, nor with the tradition of Ethiopia's diverse lines of aristocracy and the Church of Ethiopia.

The concentration of both political and economic power in one City, naturally acted as "a lit candle that attracts moths," some to their ultimate destructions as was evidenced in the massacre of officials in the 1960 failed Coup and the genocidal murder of tens of thousands of Ethiopians by Mengistu in the 1977 Red Terror and after. Migration to Addis Ababa was not limited to Tygrean "nobles-notables" and "title holders," but was also a tragic national trend that became a trend throughout the Empire. It is not only "titled" men who flocked to Addis Ababa but a number of Ethiopians seeking jobs and opportunities. Those Ethiopians were considered intruders and their ethnic group devalued and stigmatized as "biraris" by the local entrenched residents mainly Mehale Sefaris and their descendants as well as some of the local nobility.

The new wealth of Ethiopian aristocrats, court retainers, merchants, zebegnas, Mehale Sefaris et cetera who resided in Addis Ababa was created in a new format of urban development at great cost to the rest of the population of Ethiopia. Such new wealth created a gulf between the overwhelming majority of Ethiopians living in rural Ethiopia and the new "urbanites." Such development led to one of the most tragic situation in "modern" Ethiopia. Often you find the children of great patriots and veterans of numerous battles and wars who defended Ethiopia with their lives ending up getting no opportunity for education or any benefit while residents of Addis Ababa and few urban centers, irrespective of their service to the nation, getting most of the opportunities. Why should anyone die for Ethiopia if his/her children were to be given none of the benefits that such a person paid for with his/her own life? With the Mehale Sefaris controlling state power, the inequity of their government was of that nature.

The Mehale Sefaris added strength by including in their outer ranks those "titled"

individuals from the provinces and others who showed great loyalty to the sitting Emperor. After the five years War with Italy, and the reestablishment of Haile Selassie as Emperor of Ethiopia in 1941, a number of Ethiopian patriots were opposed to Haile Selassie and his effort to reestablish an absolute Monarchy. Some of the leading members of the Patriots were truly great heroes. From Shoa, for example, such as Takele Woldehawariat, Ababe Aregie, and Mesfin Sileshi were famous patriots of the resistance. Some of those great heroes, such as Mesfin Sileshi did recant and did become staunch supporters of the Emperor after they were rewarded with great titles and great fortune expropriated from the enemy. For a large number of Tygrean patriots the story was not as pleasant as that of their counterparts from Addis Ababa and vicinity. Tygrean patriots who fought bravely against a brutal fascist army for all of the five year occupation in their home base were neglected at times mistreated, whereas individuals like Ras Seyoum who had renounced Ethiopian independence and were receiving Italian lire were given precedent and even appointed to prominent positions. All such inequities of Haile Selassie triggered the First Woyane Movement and many other rebellions to the day he was overthrown by the Derg in 1974.

The fate of some of the more colorful and heroic individuals was sad. For example Belata Hailemariam Redda, who lead the First Woyane Movement, was imprisoned for long period, and Belay Zeleke of Gojjam, one of the great patriots was executed as a common criminal by hanging. The republican Takele Woldehawariat of Shoa, a moral man who did not like the way the true patriots of the five-year resistance movement were being marginalized by “bandas” and “returnees,” which group included Haile Selassie and his family with their retainers, stepped out to bring about fundamental changes in the power structure of the Ethiopian monarchical organization. He died in a shot out with Haile Selassie’s security men. Some Tygreans, just like their counterparts elsewhere betrayed such great heroes in support of Haile Selassie and foiled all kinds of efforts to create a new Ethiopian government with republican ideals. All such opportunists and the returnees with Haile Selassie were all rewarded and assimilated in Addis Ababa or given title and offices back in Tygrei or other parts of the Empire. Those were parts of opportunist individuals whom Haile Selassie used to devastate Tygrei and other parts of Ethiopia. Specially the oppression in Tygrei was extremely severe partially as punishment for the First Woyane Movement, and partially due to the pre-existing rigidity of the social structure in the Northern part of Ethiopia, and the denuded environment due to over use of the land. Thus with no central government development assistance or program, famine and poverty were perpetual reality in most of Tygrei and Wollo, Lasta area. As a result of the relentless deprivation very many Tygreans, Wolloies, et cetera had to emigrate to other parts of Ethiopia [which is their absolute right to do so]. Because of such control by one tiny group of individuals the fate of a nation, Ethiopians were devalued and given pejorative labels, for example, Tygreans were identified as perpetual beggars, Oromos as fools, Wolloies as bar-room maids et cetera, et cetera.

Ethiopians from Arisi. Bale. Begemder/Gondar. Gojjam. Tygrei. and Wello/Azebo-

Raya had repeatedly mounted rebellion against the Mehale Sefari run government of Haile Selassie. There are several causes for such rebellion, such as over taxation, improper allocation of land, corrupt government officials, poverty and neglect et cetera. During that long reign of Haile Selassie, many of the Tygrean officials, as their counterparts from elsewhere, serving Haile Selassie, never looked back at the miserable condition people of Tygrei were living under. It took young idealists to start the Second Woyane movement after all hopes of reform was once again squashed by Mengistu Hailemariam, the unadulterated pure evil and the very soul of the revived Mehale Sefaris started murdering people all over Ethiopia specially in Addis Ababa, Dessie, Mekele, Gondar, Asmara targeting Tygreans. I want us all to remember the tens of thousands who were murdered, tortured, incarcerated long prison terms because of their ethnic identity.

The incontrovertible fact is that the oppression of Ethiopians was carried out with a coherent and fully developed structural “new-feudal” system in place organized and operated by the Mehale Sefari functionaries, and almost every local leader had a hand in the system of oppression that had kept Ethiopians in poverty, ignorance, and national apathy. The ordinary subjects of the Ethiopian Empire were also participants, in a real sense, in the system of oppression prevalent to this day. Domestic relations, child rearing, social interactions at every level were affected by such culture of oppression. It is this fact of a systemic culture of oppression that makes the allocation of culpability to few agents of a particular ethnic background a difficult task. With such views of mine, I do not see how I could be accused of simplifying the political problems of Ethiopia as a one dimensional feud between Tygrei and Shoa.

### **C. Economic Concentration and Corruption**

Even the hated government of Meles Zenawi was able to do in less than ten years what the Mehale Sefari controlled governments did not do in one hundred years. Do you think a single modern building would have been built outside of Addis Ababa let alone an entire complex of a highly regarded college of Technology in Tygrei if the Mehale Sefaris were in control of the Ethiopian Government? It would not have happened in a Century. No other part of Ethiopia either would have benefited from any serious investment, new roads, new schools et cetera if the Mehale Sefaris were in power. It is not enough writing high minded polemic hiding behind an academic chair or an immigrant’s hole, if you love to see Ethiopia move from its political doldrums, the first thing to do is to stop glorifying obnoxious leaders such as Menilik. And the second and most important thing to do is to reject the Mehale Sefaris and their political return strategy in toto. They ought not to have a single role to play in shaping our Ethiopia from now on. They are disruptive, manipulative, greedy group whose only interest is the absolute control of the economic and political lives of seventy million Ethiopians.

I criticized the Government of Meles Zenawi for totally different reason than the reasons the Mehale Sefaris have against Meles Zenawi and his Government. They

drum up their hate-filled criticism against the present Government by pretending that they are with the common people of Ethiopia. In reality what the Mehale Sefaris want is one thing and only one thing: political power. I criticized Meles for not being more vigorous in creating more economic centers in all regions of the nation away from Addis Ababa. I wanted to see positive steps to move the Ethiopian government away from Addis Ababa to other regions further South in Yerga Alem or Arba Minch and half the government to Bahr Dar or Debre Markos or Gondar. I wanted Meles to close all offices of international organizations including the OAU [African Union] and most of the Embassies thereby effectively clearing the main source of corruption, prostitution, and general moral deterioration. Ethiopia with its millions of people starving, millions more suffering and dying of Aids/pestilence and numerous diseases, with the highest infant mortality rate in the world, being the least developed nation on Earth et cetera has no business hosting and accommodating international organizations, numerous Embassies, and thousands of international personnel and diplomats. The Mehale Sefaris and their family members and the few corrupt residents of Addis Ababa engaged in exploitative trade/business are the only ones benefiting from the crumbs falling of the tables of the over prized collection of nepotistic and incestuous employees of such international organizations and Embassies.

I criticized Meles and his government vehemently for not defending the interest of Ethiopia and for not preserving the territorial integrity and Sovereignty of Ethiopia with absolute devotion and vigor. I even went to the extent of labeling him as “Menilik III” for his willingness to bargain off Ethiopian territory for temporary political gain, but hurting Ethiopia’s long term interest as Menilik II did a century ago. If you read Meles Zenawi’s “Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy,” which is proudly posted in their Website, you will be appalled by their wanton disregard and recapitulations and abandonment of Ethiopia’s vital interest and resource, as well as the Ethiopians living in the Afar Coastal Territories, and in the central “Ethiopia-Eritrea boundary” region of Kunama and Irob areas. Meles and his government officials still think that the issue of Ethiopian Afar Coastal Territory is a matter of economic question rather than a question of Sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ethiopia. This is a very seriously flawed mind set, as I have pointed out in my earlier discussion of the ideas of Messay Kebede.

The Mehale Sefaris were never that much concerned by the territorial loss or the independence of Eritrea. This attitude is consistent with the thinking of Menilik in the sense that the Mehale Sefaris do not want any kind of close relationship developing between the Tygreans and the “Eritreans” for the combined force of those Ethiopians could easily overwhelm the ambition of the Mehale Sefaris to regain power. They have succeeded in creating a wedge of animosity between the people of Tygrei and “Eritrea.” It is particularly tragic to see these historically closely related people developing such hatred for each other, for the people who gain the most from such animosity are the Mehale Sefaris. To some extent the “Eritreans” have also contributed to the current situation due to their arrogance usually based on the fact of having a “modern” city of Asmara of which they should never have been

proud of because that city stands as a symbol of colonial rule where “Eritreans” were treated no better than slaves. For the people of that part of Ethiopia it is time for them to wake up and realize the disastrous course of action they have taken being manipulated into secession and conflict by the corrupt rule of the Mehale Sefaris. They should have realized that the problem was not with the people of Ethiopia or the land of Ethiopia, but the oppressive government of the Mehale Sefaris. And Eritreans ought to reexamine their side of the equation.

There is also another selfish reason why the Mehale Sefaris seem to favor the secession of Eritrea because not allowing Eritrea to cede would mean to them war and conflict diverting the meager wealth of the nation to such effort. To the Mehale Sefaris such diversion of fund even to defend and preserve the integrity of the nation as a whole is not acceptable since it interferes with their use of such wealth to build Addis Ababa and the peaceful exploitation of the rest of the people of Ethiopia. The Mehale Sefaris conception of Ethiopia when ever they refer to Ethiopia is from the point of view centered from Addis Ababa, which is a land locked geographic reality. If the Coastal Ethiopian Territory of Afar is now ceded to “Eritrea,” it makes no difference to the Mehale Sefaris for they believe they are land locked any ways. This was the problem with Menilik, and again and again with the Mehale Sefaris that individual Ethiopians do not matter as long as the Mehale Sefaris with their Emperors kept their fortress, Addis Ababa, free and well stocked by exploiting the rest of Ethiopia. This is the unvarnished truth about how the Mehale Sefaris and children of Menilik think of themselves and “Ethiopia” by the extent of their dominance and control, not the worth of the Ethiopian people, not their history, not their culture, not even personal relationships et cetera.

What ever hardship Ethiopia faces due to a loss of our Ethiopian Afar Coastal Territory, Red Sea Coastal ports, will not affect the Mehale Sefaris since they will simply pass that hardship of additional cost to the rest of the people of Ethiopia while they will be maintaining their life style in Addis Ababa sucking us all dry of any wealth. In our name they will be borrowing money that will be spent building factories and other development projects around this one area. I do not need to draw down statistical data how Addis Ababa and vicinity sucked up most of our resources and borrowed fund. Just six months ago the Bole Airport was boasting its expansion at the cost of two hundred million dollars; I heard not a peep from the Mehale Sefaris about such abuse of our meager fund especially considering the ongoing fact of half the population of Ethiopia is in a state of perpetual hunger and at the brink of famine. By contrast when a few years back when Mekele had a modestly priced asphalted Airport they were hysterically screaming through their surrogates all over the Mehale Sefaris associated Websites, magazines, and newspapers.

### **Come-Back Effort**

My least concern has to do with political elections. For the Mehale Sefaris political election is everything because that is the only way they can use their manipulative skill to distort the truth and influence common people to vote for them. They will not

attempt to take power by fighting for it. They have no courage, and are fearful of dying or getting hurt. Their motto is “You fight, I reap the benefit.” Even in the establishment of opposition groups, unless there are groups of Mehale Sefaris as leaders and behind the seen manipulators, no organization will be able to muster any strength to advance a political and economic program helpful to the nation as whole. Mehale Sefaris are used to pulling strings of their puppets than doing their own dirty work. Mind you, even in trying to discredit me, they have to find a naive upstart to attack me. At this moment, I can imagine them reclining in their sofas and laughing their heads off while a Tygrean and a “perceived” Tygrean are at each others throats.

In recent times, the Mehale Sefaris have avoided attacking Meles since they believe they have controlled him to some extent, and are directing their attacks against those symbols of justice and challenge to their history of manipulation, betrayal, treachery, oppression of millions of Ethiopians. They talk of power sharing, democracy, human rights et cetera, et cetera. Is it now they realized there are such things. Where were they during the time of one of the worst famine periods in Ethiopia in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s? All this foaming from the mouth has one single reason—the temporary loss of total political control. Ethiopia is exceedingly better off even with Meles than it ever was under Haile Selassie or Menilik in terms of being more inclusive and open to all members of the Ethiopian society. The problem with Meles and Mengistu is that the type of revolutionary change that was taking places due to the participation of their groups ended up overwhelming their capacity to be enlightened teachers and leaders of a society. Mengistu ended becoming the worst genocidal murderer and his government the most corrupt. Meles lost direction and became hostage to hostile forces to Ethiopia and compromised vital Ethiopian interests ending up a landlocked Country. None of that, matters for the Mehale Sefaris as long as they are situated at the center of power and insure that their money source is secure in their fortress, Addis Ababa, the rest of Ethiopia starve, die of Aids, live in filth, and doomed with ignorance.

The ethical and moral development of the Mehale Safaris and their appendages seem to have been arrested at the Stage Two level of Kohlberg’s stages of moral development. There seems to be a barrier that hinder them from challenging authority. They have an unhealthy degree of respect and difference to those who are in power. The main effort of people like that is to be part of the fold of authority not to change or challenge it. Any person who questions such authority runs being victimized rather than supported by the Mehale Sefaris. The Mehale Sefaris have identified themselves with such figures of authority such as Menilik, Haile Selassie, Mengistu, and even Meles Zenawi. And criticizing such figures is as bad as blaspheming God in the minds of the Mehale Sefaris and their supporters. I believe this is the case due to an arrested moral development of the Mehale Sefaris and their appendages. They will not move to higher moral standards because they are conditioned in a culture that rewards greatly those who follow order and fearful of father-figure authority. Such state of mind is not helpful to any development effort. We need to break the artificial shell that is imprisoning and holding us back from our growth as full human beings.

One of the compelling evidences of the failure of the Mehale Sefari incubated modernization experiment of the last one hundred years is encapsulated in this recent skirmish, a kind of a “hurricane in a kettle,” where there was a couple of months earlier cordial relationship between this author and his detractor, but now could not find enough mud to fling at one another. The tragedy will play out its course, and would leave a number of people the worse off for having visited such Websites. In a way we are harvesting what we sowed. We are what we are, not purely on our own, but with support from you all. A number of people are looking at our disagreements as a fight between ethnicism and opportunism. The most enduring fact that seems to have emerged from this interlude seems to be “elitism” in its most abhorrent deformity is still in the service and control of the Mehale Sefaris. If you dissent, as this author did for the good of all Ethiopians, you risk the attack of the Mehale Sefaris.

I must remind my readers that I am focusing on a limited but significant past events in the life of a pulsating nation. This means if we look into other contemporaneous events during any period in Ethiopian history including the period in our discussion, we will find several other constructive activities by our leaders including Menilik worthy of recognition. However, just because our hellish existence is punctuated now and then by some achievements, does not mean that we censor ourselves from pointing out our devastating and long-lasting problems. In writing this essay my effort is to correct the misreading of Ethiopian history on the activities of Ethiopian leaders, and to level the playing field for generations of Ethiopians because some groups, such as the Mehale Sefaris, are coming into the game well fortified with myth and distorted Ethiopian history thereby gaining undue advantage in the game of life as well as in the game of Ethiopian politics against the rest of us.

My interest in the history of modernity in Ethiopia is very deeply seated. It is also outside of the thesis of this essay. In a way it is a search for an anchor for a conflicted life. Just as a number of my Ethiopian brothers and sisters, who were born after the Italian occupation of parts of Ethiopia, I have experienced first hand the hyphenation of our Ethiopian identity. The main characteristics of my generation, of the lucky few, is the fact that we all attended secular government schools from grade school through college (to a few of us). [The attrition rate was the worst of any school system I have heard about in the world. Sadly none of my starting class mates in grade school made it past the eighth grade.] My generation of Ethiopians grew up straddling two completely different worlds: 1) the world of family and home life, for most Ethiopian children was usually full of atrocious pecking order and chaotic, and living often in abject poverty; and 2) the few lucky ones having a chance to attend school were sheltered and protected to some extent from many of the inequities of society that promoted false expectations. It is a wonder to me that we did not become raving lunatics. May be we are in far subtle way undetected.

The Ethiopian government structure of centralized administration with close administrative working relationship between the Emperor and his representatives



was a new approach in Ethiopia's long history. I will credit Menilik for such foundational change. He did bring about a form of centralization that helped Haile Selassie to consolidate executive power in the Emperor that had been defused and compromised with the ascendance of powerful local warlords and leaders effectively holding a number of Ethiopian Emperors hostages during the period of Zemene Mesafint. This was not some little achievement of Emperor Menilik. This is akin to laying the very foundation of the Modern Ethiopian State. He had also assimilated areas that used to be under the sovereign power of ancient Ethiopia latter falling into disorganized and fractured tribal settlements. But it takes more than having contiguous territorial expanse to have a viable nation.

We Ethiopians have come to a crossroads where we have to make serious choices about our future, leaders, and relationships with each other. There is no way we can go back to the stifling control of the Mehale Sefaris after having fought our way out of their oppressive rule of a Century. Under the worst scenario if the Mehale Sefaris get back absolute political control in the guise of the so called opposition group where they have token ethnic based representations, the very structure they condemn in the present Meles government, we are heading to a bitter fragmentation of the nation. Let us see how well they will survive in their fortress, Addis Ababa, by themselves if we divorce Addis Ababa and the Mehale Sefaris from the rest of Ethiopia. My strong criticism of the Mehale Safaris and recantation of their origin in no way is meant to dehumanize, deform, or insult their humanity and their Ethiopianness. Because we have suffered for a century due to the Mehale Sefari's corrupt, oppressive, cliquish, and exclusive form of government, I have every right to challenge and correct the historical lies they perpetuated on us, and thwart the manipulation they are still using on us.

END OF PART ONE

Tecola W. Hagos  
October 2004

Next:

PART TWO: Tewodros, Yohannes IV, and the Myth of Colonialism

PART THREE: Sahle Selassie, Menilik II, and the Betrayal of Ethiopia

PART FOUR: The Peace Treaty of Paris of 1947, Conclusion

[The 1841 Treaty](#)

[Evidence lists](#)

