

***PLURALISM AS AN INSTRUMENT OF
STABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT***

by

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Pluralism as an Instrument of Stability and Development

The topic springs from an obvious assumption. That is a society is composed of various and definite social entities i.e. ethnic, religious and cultural groupings, etc. Twentieth century societies, whether developed or developing, do manifest various kinds of social forces that are the product of the development of the productive forces. There are those who own the means of production, there are those who only sell their labor power, there are those who sell their brain power, there are those who neither sell their labour nor their brain power and there are those who till the land.

The assumption, therefore, seems to plead for a political system to take this empirical evidence into consideration if it decides and chooses to have stability and persevere in its socio-economic and cultural development.

The topic implicitly rejects the monist outlook that repudiates the existence of the various social forces and embarks upon establishing a political system that is particularistic and exclusive.

It also implicitly rejects the notion that one party state whether communist, capitalist or other can build the chiliastic society that everybody is longing for. Finally the topic implicitly confirms or establishes the contention that monist political systems are, in most instances, unstable and hence face difficulties in their socio-economic and cultural development.

Taking Ethiopia of the last 17 years - 1974-1991 - as a prototype or sample of our study, we will try to see if the above assumptions are correct. This task undoubtedly requires an objective and realistic assessment and appraisal of the political system of the time. Questions such as what type of political system did Ethiopia have? Did this political system have legitimacy? If so how and from where? and if not why not? was the political system stable or not? If yes, how? If not why not? How did the political system treat its "opposition"¹ and "dissenters"?² Did the political system facilitate economic development? If yes how? If no why not? etc., etc.

What we mean by political system is, simply that, a government is democratic if it tolerates and or exercises the following "--respect for individual right, representative institutions, responsible and limited government, the art of compromise--³ and authoritarian and monopolistic if it does not.

The Provisional Military Government, on stating its aims and objectives early in the revolution had flirted with the popular concepts of "fairness", "human justice", "humanity", "equality of man", all encapsulated in what it referred to as Hibretesebawinet or "Ethiopian Socialism."⁴ Of the five principles of its political philosophy, the first read:

All Ethiopians of whatever religion, language, sex or local affinity shall live together in equality, fraternity, harmony and unity under the umbrella of the country. Ethiopia will become a country in which justice, equality, and freedom will prevail.⁵

The government had also underlined the fact that "--- the political philosophy should spring from the culture and the soil of Ethiopia and should, moreover, emanate from the aspirations of the broad masses and not be imported from abroad like some decorative article of commerce."⁶ (emphasis mine)

The Provisional Military Government in its Declaration on the Economic Policy of Socialist Ethiopia stressed the importance of "elimination of poverty", the ending of "exploitation of the Ethiopian people". And to this end, it proposed that "the Government as the representative of the people, and in the interest of the mass of Ethiopian Workers and peasants directly owns and controls the natural resources and key industrial, commercial and financial sectors of the economy."⁷

It is evident from the declarations of both the political philosophy and economic policy of the government that the political system was not going to be democratic where a constitutionally bounded government would be established which would guarantee "---

-the natural right of the individual, the limited powers of government, the separation of powers -- civil liberties -- the rule of law and the protection of freedom --".⁸

The Provisional Military Government could have been cognizant of the fact that the Haile Selassie regime was ended by the active participation of the people of Ethiopia i.e. the Oromos, the Amharas, the Tigreans, the Christians, the Moslems etc. In other words, the absolute monarchy was brought to an end by the selfless participation and sacrifices of the peasants, workers, students, the armed forces and the white collar workers. Their burning desire was to create a government where they will have their inputs in how it is run. They wanted to stop being subjects and start being citizens. Their aspiration was to be invested with the power and decide as to how that power should be devolved to the party that enunciates better political, economic, social and other programmes for the country.

Instead the Provisional Military Government proposed or embarked upon establishing a political system that was antithetical to the one envisioned and intended by the people. It created a political system in the likeness of the rest of Africa, Latin America and Asia. A system that was blind to the glaring reality of the multiplicity or plurality of the social forces in the country.

Legitimacy

on usurping the helms of government, the Provisional Military Government found it necessary to discredit and erode the legitimacy of its predecessor, the Emperor. In its aims and objectives it observed:

The Ethiopian people had effectively used the crown as a rallying point in their hour of trials and tribulations. But Emperor Haile Selassie, unlike some of his predecessors, grossly abused the authority, dignity and honour of this respected office from the beginning to the end of his reign of more than half a century: self-aggrandizement, frequent private visits abroad and complete disregard of domestic affairs despite a slow and agonizing disintegration of the rural economy and mass starvation.⁹

The legitimacy of the Emperor to rule the country was based on tradition. This tradition was strongly anchored in the longstanding myth and legend of an Ethiopian Queen who visited King Solomon and had a son by him named Menelik the First. Emperor Haile Selassie, therefore, traces his blood line to Menelik the First and hence to King

Solomon. His official title reflected this lineage. "Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah Elect of God" ¹⁰

The Provisional Military Government wanted to establish its legitimacy to rule by masquerading as the only organized social force that could automatically fill the vacuum which was created when the government of Prime Minister Endalkatchew was forced to resign. Compelled by this circumstances, the Provisional Military Government announced that the class background of those who constitute the Provisional Government as being from a humble background who could easily identify themselves with the plight of the masses. This was not all. The Government claimed that all the revolutionary measures, that it undertook i.e. "---the nationalization of banks, insurance companies, industrial and commercial companies, rural lands, urban land and extra house, private schools etc." ¹¹ "had the active support of the broad Ethiopian masses " ¹²

2.4 The Government further tried to solidify its legitimacy enunciating its mission in the Programme of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) it issued on April 20, 1976. The objective of the NDR was the complete abolition of feudalism, imperialism and bureaucratic capitalism and laying of a strong foundation for transition to socialism.

The Provisional Government Playing Dual Role: Government and Party

As has been made evident from the discussion so far, there was no legally constituted party in Ethiopia. However, after the Provisional Military Government assumed the function of Head of State in September 1975 ¹⁴ and especially the proclamation of the NDR, the Government was playing a dual role i.e. party and government hence the de facto establishment of the Workers Party of Ethiopia.

A strong and water tight argument could be made for this case. The National Democratic Revolution "--- firmly places Ethiopia on the Socialist course of development" and "with the victory over the forces of feudalism, imperialism and bureaucratic capitalism, it envisages a democratic and socialist republic of Ethiopia led by a working class party" ¹⁵

Another equally important reason is the fact that the Politburo and the Central Committee members of the now discredited and defunct Workers Party of Ethiopia were also the central players, the nucleus and midwives during the birth of the Commission for Organizing the Workers Party of Ethiopia (COPWE) on December 17, 1979 and the Workers Party of Ethiopia on September 12, 1984.

In order to meet the challenges of the time i.e. organizational work among the masses, politicization and indoctrination and also the Herculean task of implementing the programmes of the NDR and establishing the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE), tasks that are usually carried out, ideally and under normal circumstances, by a workers party or communist party, the government established, by proclamation, on May 16, 1976, the Provisional Office for Mass Organization Affairs (POMOA). ¹⁶ POMOA, since then, became the most important office and ideology.

The Party

William Tordoff assessing the political developments in African countries contends that these trends are observed. First is the trend towards single party rule, necessitated, according to some leaders to end factionalism and to achieve national unity. It is argued by many that single party reflects the consensus of African society. The second trend is the adoption of ideology by parties in order to give their subjects a sense of direction and purpose. The third trend is the subordination of the party to the state. ¹⁷

While two of the trends observed by Tordoff in African political development did manifest themselves to a certain extent in Ethiopia, the third trend had no relevance whatsoever. The Workers Party of Ethiopia was created to play its historical role of completing the National Democratic Revolution and laying the groundwork for a smooth transition to socialism. ¹⁸

Article six of the constitution of the PDRE established the Party as the organ that played the foremost role in the political system. ¹⁹ It goes without saying that the organs of the state and the mass organizations were guided by the policies charted out by the party. ²⁰

The WPE was a hybrid of East European and African parties. It was an elite as well as mass party. It was an elite because, according to the 1983 statistics, the membership composition looked as follows. Workers 21.7%, Peasants 3.3%,

- intellectuals, office workers, revolutionary army and others 75.0%.²¹ It nevertheless purported to be a mass party because it had organized them thus: All Ethiopia Trade Union (AETU), All Ethiopia Peasant Association (AEPA), the Revolutionary Ethiopia Youth Association (REYA), the Revolutionary Ethiopia Women's Association (REWA) and others.²²

Raymond Aron, early in 1960s, writing on the nature of parties has categorized them as "monopolistic" and "monolithic": According to him a monopolistic party possesses a monopoly of political activity while monolithic party refers to the internal structure, cohesion and unity.²³

Was WPE a monopolistic and monolithic party? WPE was definitely a monopolistic party. It was so because the constitution of the PDRE had accorded it that role. It was so because it was the only party that dominated the political activities of the country. It can be discerned correctly that the party had pervaded and permeated the life of the people.

WPE, nevertheless, was not a monolithic party. Though it was structurally and, at that, hierarchical, it was not cohesive and was ridden with contradictions and animosity. However idealistic were the recruiting principles and directives, the party ended up drafting sycophants, opportunists, corrupt individuals who sought to advance their own interests. These practices antagonized and alienated dedicated and principled members. This situation was aggravated by the working principle of "democratic centralism" which was only a misnomer that tried to whitewash the centralized and dictatorial nature of the working relationship.

Coupled with this, the patron-client relationship that was prevalent in the party undermined and corroded the party as a monolithic entity. In fact it could be argued that these were some of the most important factors that contributed to the delegitimization of the party principally among the rank and file member and then among the people.

Opposition and Dissent in the WPE

Opposition and dissent are considered healthy in a democratic pluralistic society. Accommodation and compromise are the trademark of same. However in a society where the dictatorship of the proletariat or the Workers Party is in power, opposition and dissents are not tolerated. Opposition, according to L. Shapiro implies the existence of group or groups whose aim is to oust the government in power while dissent connotes criticism, exhortation, persuasion etc., etc.

When Lenin banned or prohibited "factionalism" in the Party in March 1921, his justification was that the luxury of discussion and disputes that had been tolerated by the party meant to the bourgeoisie sign of weakness. That was no longer to be the case. Stalin using and intensifying the clamping down on dissenters consolidated his absolute despotic power between 1923 and 1936.²⁴ If dissent is not tolerated for fear of upsetting the shaky unity of party policy which is traditionally considered necessary then, in the end, one man will decide arbitrarily.²⁵ It could be argued, therefore, that there is a direct relationship between stifling dissenters and the emergence of the cult of personality.

The short history of the WPE is similar to that of the Bolshevik party. As the party was one man's party and as the party members, including the central committee were docile, apathetic and phlegmatic that kept themselves only as appendages to the Politburo and the Secretary General, the latter was the prime mover, architect, the planner and executioner of all policies that emanated from the Party, the Shengo (Ethiopian Parliament), and the State Council.

The secretary general did not benefit from the opinions of the membership for the latter did not venture its ideas for fear of antagonizing him. Almost all the party conferences including those of the C.C. and also the Shengo could not claim to have deliberated on any of the important issues facing the country. The Third Emergency Session of the National Shengo held on April 22, 1991 could be considered as an exception to the rule. It was convened to deliberate on the fast deteriorating war situation in the country. Though the members were forthcoming and resourceful in their ideas and criticisms, it was too late to say the least. With their motto "onward with Comrade Mengistu's Revolutionary Leadership," the Party, the

Shengo and the country as well went astray bringing the end of the omnipotent leader, the party and the National Shengo.

The party and the Shengo adopted this pathetic culture after it learned the incorrigibility, the callous and sanguinary nature of the Secretary General. He did not tolerate dissent and browbeat everybody. He was quick to accuse his opponents as "imperialist agents",* subversive elements and accomplices of the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Party",** reactionary and working hand-in-glove with the enemies of the Ethiopian Revolution.*** ²⁶

Those ministers and experts that dared to challenge his policies and priorities were sacked immediately**** and others fled the country or decided not to return to the country after their working visit outside the country.***** It is contended by many insiders that Mengistu led a regime that held the record for defection.

In one of the meetings that he was chairing, he tried to impress upon the participants, mostly ministers and economic experts by simply claiming that the Gross Domestic Product of the country in 1977-78 would grow by 7.5%. The economic experts were stunned and dumbfounded for a moment for they did not know where the figure came from.

In light of the deteriorating international economic situation, that definitely had bearing on the national economy -inflation, fluctuation of prices for commodity prices they reasoned with him that the figure he quoted was a bit exaggerated. This irritated and agitated him. He then enquired of the experts and participants "what are you afraid of? Why can't we just say that the GDP will grow by 7.5%? His intention was to impress the world. At any rate the GDP for that year was a pathetic "0.4%".²⁷ The expert who dared to challenge the phantom figure and who gave an enlightened and educated analysis of the economic situation was immediately sacked.

* Major Sisay Habte (executed)

** Alemayehu Haile et.al. (executed)

*** Colonel Atnafu Abate (executed)

**** Economic Expert, Addis Anteneh (sacked)

***** Goshu, Dawit, Teferra, Berhane et.al. (defected)

The clamp down on information and total monopolization of the mass media-script, radio and television - by the party and the state and the iron-clad rule of censorship that robbed the people of their democratic and constitutional right had driven them to emulate the tactics employed by their brother dissenters in the one-time-socialist countries. Using pen names, they wrote open letter to Mengistu and or his henchmen exposing their sinister deeds, scandals, corruption, assassination and mail it to the Amharic section of the Voice of America (VOA) which gladly read them every fortnight on Thursday evening.

As VOA has been able to win the hearts and minds due to its "uncensored" reporting, the tactic had been very effective in further eroding the flimsy legitimacy that the Party and the Government had.

The clamp down on information was so strict and rigorous that even certain C.C. members of the Party as well as members of the Shengo were ill informed or uninformed about the development at the war front. This was the bone of contention at the Third National Shengo Emergency meeting where members after members expressed their dismay. It would not be too far from the truth if one stated that majority of the Shengo members learned about the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) forces closing on Addis after the latter had captured Ambo some 150 kms from Addis.

WPE. the State and Stability

From September 15, 1974 the day when the Provisional Military Government assumed the function of Head of State, the country had not had an iota of peace. It has to be recalled that, until then, the only "war" that the country was engaged in was a skirmish in the Northern province of Eritrea.

Marxist-Leninist parties do practice a rugged religion called particularism. The exclusive nature of the party and the dictatorial and monopolistic nature of its doing things do alienate people. Dictated by the dogma of Marxism-Leninism, the leaders of the Ethiopian revolution categorized and pigeon-holed individuals in a society into the revolutionary camp and the reactionary camp. This bifurcation, myopic as it is, had been the source of all problems and hence

contributed to the instability in the country.

On the question of political power, the position of the party was noted as follows:

"The theory of Marxism-Leninism affirms that the basic question of any revolution is the question of political power. This question is resolved only when government power is transferred from the hands of reactionary ruling class to those of progressive classes.²⁸

To a Marxist-Leninist party, political power is everything and all others have to be subordinated to it or are secondary. The exclusive and particularistic nature of the party had convinced the leadership that the only way it could maintain and hold on power was by labeling others. To this end the Party had castigated the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU) as a "collection of feudal lords,"²⁹ the Eritrean People Liberation Front (EPLF) as "reactionary secessionists,"³⁰ and the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Party (EPRP) as "the right wing of the petty bourgeois."³¹

The Tigrean People Liberation Front (TPLF), essentially a splintering group from the EPRP began its struggle in 1975.³² The Ethiopian Peoples Democratic Movement (EPDM) was formed in 1981 and joined with the TPLF in 1988 to form the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF).³³ To this roster one should add the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) that was created during the last 15 years and is operating in most of the southern part of the country.

It should be stressed, once again, that it is the particularistic, exclusiveness, monopolistic and sanguinary character of the Party that drove the above and other "liberation fronts" to the bush and start their armed struggle. Tedd Robert contends that the potential for political violence is a function of the degree to which ---discontents are blamed on the political system and its agents ---.³⁴ He further argued that "---discontent arising from the perception of relative deprivation is the basic, instigating condition for participating in collective violence ---"³⁵

Webster defines the word deprive as (a) to take something away from and (b) to keep from having or enjoying ---. The Workers Party of Ethiopia and the PDRE had deprived the Ethiopian people of their

democratic right. The right to organize freely, the right to speak, to publish and to assemble with others to express their opinion are the center of every democratic political system. Freedom of expression entails the right of those citizens who hold and advocate various and possibly diametrically opposed views for community acceptance.

Although Articles 46, 47, 49, 51 and 52 of the constitution of the PDRE were in accordance with the democratic rights of civilized societies, the leaders of the WPE and of the PDRE had failed to implement them thus robbing and depriving their citizens their civil rights. True enough "the stability of any given polity depends upon the relationship between the level of political participation and the level of political institutionalization--"³⁷ However, the Ethiopian policy, a controlled, muzzled, stifled, apathetic and dictated one could not freely participate in the politics of its country. It was this dictatorial and totalitarian character of the regime that was the cause of the proliferation of "liberation movements".

The WPE. the State and Economic Development

It is truism to state that peace and stability are two principal preconditions for economic development. However, the Ethiopian people, during the reign of the Military government had not known peace. And if there had been any improvement in the economy, which was rare, it definitely was not because there was peace but because of other factors. The years 1974 to 1978 were period when the revolution was characterized by domestic political, social and economic instability and external aggression --- economic performance of the period averaged GDP growth rate of 0.4%.³⁸ (For more insight in the economic performance for the years between 1974 and 1987 see table 1).

Table 1: GDP Sectorial Growth rates: 1961=62 to 1987=88

	1961-62 1965-66	1967-68 1973-74	1974-75 1977-78	1978-79 1979-80	1980-81 1982-83	1983-84 1984-85	1985-86	1987-88
CDP	4.4	3.4	0.4	5.6	3.1	-4.6	11.3	-3.8
Sector								
Agriculture		1.9	1.8	0.4	3.6	2.0	-12.4	21.5 -11.4
Industry	11.0	4.4	-1.9	12.1	3.9	1.0	4.0	2.8
Large scale		16.4	8.3	-0.3	18.9	5.8	0.6	5.3 3.6
Small scale		7.8	5.5	-0.2	3.2	2.5	1.2	2.5 n.a.
Trade and								
transport		9.4	7.0	-3.2	9.3	4.1	2.0	5.4 2.9
Other services		8.3	6.7	0.4	5.6	3.1	3.8	3.5 4.5

n.a. not available

Sources: Central Statistical Office, Statistical Abstracts. 1961-78 and National Bank of Ethiopia, Quarterly Bulletins. 1979-86.

The National Budget, which was 750 million Birr* in 1974 grew to 4.5 billion in 1987³⁹ of which 60% goes to defense. During his speech to the Eleventh WPE Regular Congress, Mengistu stressed the organic link between peace and development.

He lamented over the fact that his efforts at bringing socio-economic development were thwarted or frustrated by the absence of peace in the country.⁴⁰ It is therefore correct to point out that the economic sector was a true replica of the political sector, very pathetic! Along with these man-made problems, it has to be pointed out that the economic problems were further aggravated by the chronic drought and persistent desertification.

Having witnessed the distressing failure of a monopolistic and particularistic single party political system, one is compelled to look for an alternative political system, that will be democratic, a source of stability and a facilitator of development. One that recognizes the various social forces and their democratic right to organize and have

* one US dollar is equivalent to 2.07 Ethiopian Birr.

an input in the political processes and the way their country is run. In short, a political system that has all the necessary institutions and tolerate or encourage a high level of political participation.

In 1961 Immanuel Wallerstein, summarized the views of the students of African politics, thus:

"One view held that Africans were incapable or not yet capable of exercising responsible self rule and creating modern democratic societies ---. A second view was that the national anticolonial revolution would lead to the establishment of parliamentary democracies of western style, dominated by a small but growing middle class, reasonably devoted to the defence of civil liberties ---"⁴¹

The empirical evidence of the last thirty years or so sadly testify to the preciseness of the first view. The unity and cohesiveness of the various ethnic groups that was forged during the anticolonial struggle dissipated right after the colony attained its independence.⁴² This was so because the freedom and independence they fought for could not bring them any gain or improvement in their life. To many of them freedom, independence, liberation and revolution meant, hopefully, the end of economic exploitation, social degradation, political subjugation and most of all radical distribution of wealth.

The political leaders, instead of meeting and realizing the expectations of their people preferred to harangue about the need for national unity, hard work and self reliance. Along with this came the centralization of authority, the declaration of one party state, the creation of stifling and stultifying bureaucracy with their inevitable results of corruption, nepotism, favoritism that drove people to disillusionment, deprivation and political violence based on ethnicity and regionalism.⁴³

In the absence of legal institutions to which they can bring their grievances, people feel helpless and resort to violence with a potential of upsetting the status quo and weakening the already shaky bond between the various ethnic and nationality groups. It is the nonexistence of democratic mechanism, the harshness, draconian and ironclad laws of the state that force people to be violently opposed to the leadership. In light of these bonafide and serious problems, the efforts of nation building is shelved or kept in abeyance for sometime.

The effort to build a nation requires a radical departure from the path so far taken by the hitherto leaders.

What Type of Political System ?

The political system has to recognize the existence of ethnically and culturally diverse people in the country. It has to accept their democratic right and allow their participation in the running of their government. It has to accept their right to form parties and be represented directly or indirectly. It has to accept their ultimate control over the various institutions i.e. the executive, administrative, the judicial and the legislative.

There needs to be a constitution that is comprehensive enough to cover all facets of political life. This constitution needs to affirm the existence of the three branches of government and guarantee their specific role. It should contain the Bill of Rights which guarantees the rights and liberties of the individual that are not subject to governmental interference. This, however, is not to deny the fact that in time of war, crisis or emergencies they are subject to suspension, for the preservation of the state takes precedence over everything else. A constitution of this sort will, it is hoped, be the cement and glue that will hold the various ethnic groups or nationalities together as opposed to all other cohesive measures. This political system is, I venture to call it a democratic political system.

The fact that the Bill of Rights is part of the document of the constitution will entice the various liberation front leaders, intellectuals to return to their country and participate democratically in the political and socio-economic development. Like the Soviet Union, Ethiopia also has been hurt by the flight and immigration of its intellectuals. President Gorbachev, writing on the circumstances and conditions that forced Soviet intellectuals to flee, has the following to say.

"Our intelligentsia has a difficult history. Many intellectual including democratically minded ones who censured the tsarist regime were swept away-- abroad, where they gave their talent and knowledge to other peoples.

The intelligentsia, including intellectuals in the Bolshevik Party, suffered enormous, at times irretrievable, losses because of violations of socialist legality and the repression of the 1930s ---"⁴⁴

This has also been the sad case with Ethiopian intellectuals as well. It is therefore the genuine feelings of everyone that with conditions created and improved and with the constitution in full swing, the intellectuals that were ones thought as lost will be retrieved. The new political culture will have to make discussion, accommodation and compromise its working principles. If this is the trademark of the political system, and it has to be, then, with time, the stability that has so far been illusive will be the order of the day.

The legitimacy and power of any president and elected official should be drawn from the democratic constitution. There should also be a provision in the constitution that would give the people directly or through their representative in the parliament the right and power to impeach any public figure for scandals, corruption, and other serious offenses that are not compatible with the democratic institutions.

The term of office of the president should be fixed to between 4-5 years and the tenure be no more than two terms. It is advocated here that the two terms will, it is hoped allow the president to have a stable consistent domestic as well as foreign policy. The argument that is advanced against more than two terms is, as has been observed in experience and the world is full of it, even in a democratic political system, leaders have the tendency and proclivity to be dictatorial.

Can the Ethiopian populous transit from absolute Monarchy of Haile Selassie, monopolistic and totalitarian regime of Mengistu to a democratic pluralistic society? Can the populous pass from a rule based upon traditional legitimacy of Haile Selassie and proletarian messianism of Mengistu to one based upon a written constitution? Can these ethnically diverse people that have been dominated by one ethnic group - the Amhara since the restoration of Solomonid Dynasty in 1270⁴⁵ be accommodating and have a place for one another and share power? Can this people that was forced to lose its "self esteem and pride" the last seventeen years be able to retrieve them? Are the people ready for democracy? Are the people of Ethiopia ready to transcend their ethnic loyalty?

They are very difficult questions. If the readiness and preparedness of people for democracy is measured by the existence of a large number of educated people, by the expansion of the middle class, by the presence and correct utilization of the mass media-script, T.V., Radio and by the nature and character of the people enthusiastic as opposed to lethargic, docile, apathetic and cynic, criteria that are considered to be prerequisite for democracy to take root, then the answer will be in the negative. It is so because the measures are the reflections of the socio-economic and political development of the country.

If however literacy means the ability to read, write then 63% of the Ethiopian people are literate which qualifies them to read and understand and vote according to the dictation of their interest. With regard to the middle class, it could be said that as the economic development of many so called developing countries, the basis for the expansion of the middle class, is either regressing or static thus stunting the expansion of the middle class by the standard and criteria of the developed world. However, there is no denying the fact that there is a middle class with distinct psychological make up of its own and deep sense of responsibility.

As in most developing countries the mass media in Ethiopia is under the control of the state. Under these circumstances the chance of expanding and effectively utilizing the mass media is very little. This is further exacerbated by the limited number of radio, T.V., and most of all newspapers. For a population of over 51,000,000 the number of newspapers in the various national languages is no more than 240,000 per week.

One constructive deeds of the previous government is its campaign to eradicate illiteracy. Upon its assumption of power the illiteracy rate of the country was 93%. By 1983 it declined to 37%.⁴⁶ It had also conducted the campaign in 15 languages.⁴⁷

This has laid a solid foundation for the democratically elected government to continue building upon. I have to admit that it is a herculean task that is awaiting the government. However, with goodwill, perseverance and selfless dedication from everyone and especially from the government, the democratic culture could be disseminated.

The family, the schools, the communities and work places all have the responsibility and obligation to impart and inculcate the new democratic values, beliefs and attitudes to the population at large. It is through these and other means of socialization that the new political culture can be made to take root. The populous has to be helped to change from remaining being subjects to becoming citizens; from traditional man to modern man. Huntington on writing on the difference between traditional man and modern man said:

"Traditional man expected continuity in nature and society and did not believe in the capacity of man to change or control either. Modern man, in contrast, accepts the possibility of change and beliefs in its desirability ---"⁴⁸

It has to be stressed that nation building needs the suspension and or transcending parochialism and ethnic chauvinism. If nation building is or will be the objective of the government and to that end imparts the democratic values, beliefs, attitudes, etc to the people - "guided democracy" - and if the people cooperate and respond positively and start casting their precious vote to the one who deserves it and not to the one of their ethnic group then the "self esteem and pride" will be restored. Difficult task!

The Model of Economic Development

Both the capitalist world and the one time socialist world had presented their respective models of economic development for the third world countries to emulate. However, this has to be looked into within a framework: the ideological struggle between the two antipodal social systems. On writing on the importance of the third world to the capitalist world W.W. Rostow said:

"We must demonstrate that the underdeveloped nations - now the main focus of communist hopes - can move successfully through the preconditions into a well established take off within the orbit of the democratic world, resisting the blandishment and temptations of communism. This is, I believe, the most important single item on the Western agenda."⁴⁹(emphasis mine)

Ulyanovsky presenting an alternative model for the third world countries argues:

"Marxist-Leninists have always upheld the decisive role of the working class in the advance of the socialist revolution, in socialist construction, and they continue to do so; however, in countries where a working class has not yet taken shape, this approach to the leading role of the working class is something that the country can attain at a specific stage of non-capitalist development after first rejecting the capitalist path".⁵⁰ (emphasis mine)

The third world countries have tried and are still trying to employ first the capitalist model and then the non capitalist model but to no avail. In both instances the countries of the third world continued to remain underdeveloped, dependent and in most instances regressed in their socio-economic development.

It is due to the frustration that arose from this quagmire that compelled scholars of Latin America to first study the root cause of the problem and then prescribe or suggest a panacea for it. According to these scholars, the root cause of the problem is the nature of the relationship of the economy of the third world with that of the economy of the developed world. They argue that there is a structural linkage between the two economies that dates back to the period of colonialism.

This structural linkage, they argue, has subordinated the economies of the one time colonies - now neocolonies-to that of the developed world economies. In other words, the economies of third world has become dependent upon the economies of the developed world. Defining the concept of dependency Claude Ake said:

"An economy is dependent to the extent that its position and relations to other economies in the international system and the articulation of its internal structure make it incapable of autocentric development."⁵¹

Though there is an agreement on the nature and root cause for the underdevelopment of the third world countries, however, there has not been consensus regarding the panacea. There are those who are anti-imperialist but suggest a capitalist path to development (Paul Prebisch, Celso Furtado). There are the Marxists anti-imperialists and who propose autonomous path to development. (Dos Santos, Andre G. Franc). There are also others who argue that capitalist development can take place in dependent situation (Henrique Cordoso).

There are those who argue for a state to follow the mixed economy path to development where the state and the individual will play significant role in the economic development. It is my contention that all models have their own merits and demerits. I propose that the choice of the "right" model be left to the constitutionally elected government, the people and the intellectuals to debate, discuss and agree.

As has been made clear, a country that is ruled by a single monopolistic party will not have stability and peace that are the prerequisite for its socio-economic and political development. It is, therefore, suggested here that a multiparty, democratic political system that makes discussion, accommodation and compromise its working principle is sine quo non to economic development and political stability.

Footnotes

1/ Leonard Shapiro defined "opposition" as organized political group or groups which aims at ousting a government in power and replacing by one of its own choosing.

2/ Leonard Shapiro defined "dissent(er)" as not organized for political action, it does not seek to replace the existing regime but merely seeks to criticize, to exhort, to persuade, to be listened to."

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4/ The Aims and Objectives of the Ethiopian Provisional Military Government, published by the Ministry of Information, 1974, P. 4

5/ Ibid., P. 4

6/ Ibid

7/ State of the Ethiopian Economy Published by the Ministry of Information, 1974, Press Kit, P.3.

8/ Max Lerner; America As a Civilization, Library of Congress, 1987, P. 362

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10/ Marger Perham, The Government of Ethiopia, North Western University Press, 1969, p. 70.

11/ Yekatit, Fourth Anniversary, The Ethiopian Revolution, Vol. II, No. 1. Sept. 1978, pp.29-30.

12/ Four Years of Revolutionary Process, Propaganda and Information Committee, Sept. 1978, p. 20.

13/ Basic Documents of the Ethiopian Revolution, Published by POMOA, 1977, p. 11.

14/ Yekatit, Vol. II, No. 1, September 1978, p. 29.

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17/ William Tordoff; Government and Politics in Africa; Indiana University Press, 1984, Pp. 103-108

18/ The Workers Party of Ethiopia, Programme; Sept. 1984, p. 32.

19/ The constitution of the Peoples Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Sept. 12, 1987, p. 32.

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21/ Documents of Second COPWE Conference (in Amharic) Dec. 1982, p. 11

22/ Founding Congress of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia, Central Report, Sept. 1984, p. 29.

23/ In Leonard Schapiro's book, Political Opposition in One Party State. Can the party Alone Run a One Party State, pp. 15-16.

24/ L. Shapiro, pp. 42-43.

25/ Ibid, p. 46

26/ Addis Zemen (Ethiopian Newspaper in Amharic) Nov. 15, 1977, pp. 1-9

27/ Quoted from Befekadu Degefe's article -Profile of the Ethiopian Economy Background Papers, The Long-Term Perspective Study of

Sub-Saharan Africa, Volume 1. Country Perspective p. 61.

28/ Report delivered to the First Congress of COPWE. June 16, 1980, p. 29.

29/ Ibid, 33.

30/ "Four Years of Revolutionary Process" Sept. 1978, p. 29.

31/ Report delivered to the First Congress of COPWE, p. 33.

32/ Press Conference given by Meles Zenawi of the EPRDF, London, May 28, 1991, p. 2.

33/ Ibid

34/ T. R. Girr, Why Men Rebel, Princeton University Press, 1970 p. 8.

35/ Ibid p. 12.

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37/ Samuel p. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies: Yale University, Press 1975, p 179.

38/ Befekadu Deguefe; Profile of the Ethiopian Economy. In the Long-Term Perspective Study of Sub-Saharan Africa, Vol. 1, the World Bank, p. 60.

39/ Mengistu Hailemariam, speech he delivered to the 1st National Shengo Conference, Addis Zemen, September 10, 1989, p. 6

40/ Mengistu Hailemariam, speech he delivered to the 11th WPE Conference, Serto-Ader, March 6, 1990, p. 5.

41/ Immanuel Wallerstein, The Politics of Independence: Random House, Inc. 1961, p. 153.

42/ Ibid, p. 85

43/ For more see Wallerstein, PP 85-101 14

44/ Mikhail Gorbachew, Perestroika, New Thinking for our Country and the World: Collins, 1987, p. 81

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