**ETHNIC ADMNISTRATION IN ETHIOPIA WHAT FUTURE DOES IT HOLD?**

**BY TESFAHANNES BEYENE**

**araele13@yahoo.com**

**PART EIGHT**

Before discussing ethnic administration and its consequence it would be useful to define what we mean by ethnicity or ethnic? According to Wikipedia ethnicity is socially defined category of people who identify themselves with each other, based on common ancestral, origin, history, homeland, language, dialect, and sometimes Ideology... manifesting itself through symbolic systems such as religion, mythology, ritual, cousin, dressing, physical appearance etc.

Arend Lijphart who carried out various studies on ethnicity or ethnic rule tells us that if ethnic rule is to prevail peacefully, there must be successful political accommodation of diverse ethnic groups in society.... whereby tangible benefit can be achieved through recognition and devising appropriate institution for accommodation and power sharing within in the boundaries of the nation state. There are others who say that nations should instead enforce political legal equality of all ethnicities and that, resources and political power should be distributed to all ethnic regions equally. if you do allow ethnic divisions to grow there is a strong possibility that it could radicalize people and lead to ethnic problems and at an extreme, ethnic cleansing. This has happen in the past and will keep on happening in the future. Thus if any government adopts the policy of ethnic administration the consequence are therefore, instead of believing in shared values, ethnicity would definitely lead to a secluded community clinging to its own ethnic identity.

Presently Ethiopia is ruled by the Tigreyan ethnic minority but they want us to be believe it is a unity government, governed by all ethnic groups, who administer their regions according to the interest and needs of local population. Of course it is true they have set up multi party system of different ethnic groups in the regions, but it is a facade. Because it is the ruling ethnic party, the Tigreyans who are in complete control of the country and have a population of only 4-5 million people. While the two largest ethnic groups are the Oromos with 30 million and the Amharas with 25 million who dominated Ethiopian politics for decades in the past while the rest of the other smaller ethnic groups are watching Ethiopian politics helplessly and it is obvious the Tigreyan ethnic minority are the once who have the final decision on the destiny of Ethiopia at present. Even the so called ethnic leaders of the multi party system are being used as vehicles to promote the interest of the minority government and nothing else.

It is quite interesting to note that even during the historic period of the autocratic Ethiopian emperor-- ethnic rule was forbidden. However the Emperors legacy ended when Norther Ethiopia was dogged down by a famine in 1973 which exposed the rule of the emperor and he was deposed by a notorious blood thirsty Marxist Leninist military Junta called the Derg in 1974. Again during the reign of the Derg era its ruler Mengistu Hailemariam never allowed ethnic rule Ethiopia. However in order to stay in power he terrorized his opponents not using ethnic rule but using other tactics to cling to power and bring the country into fear and submission using cruel tactics by suppressing the population. To prove his cruelty to his country men and women Mengistu quickly got rid of the previous administration's cabinet ministers by either arresting them putting them in jail with out any trail or having them killed out right. For instance Mengistu shot dead more than 60 members of the emperors ministers by firing squad for fear that they could in turn kill him. The emperor himself was not spared, he was in fact suffocated at Mengistu's orders and his body was buried under his office toilets in Addis Abbeba. His main objective was to wipe out all traces of the emperor and his followers. Mengistu also aimed to wipe out his enemies using the feared policy of what was then called the Red Terror using arbitrary execution, lynchings and street massacres. He managed to terrorized the people of Ethiopia and Eritrea. Again his rule never introduced ethnic rule as a policy and his main admnistrative policy has always been Ethiopia Tikdem or Ethiopia first and anything else later. In today's Ethiopia, the ethnic minority government's cynical policy of war of terror which primarily promotes the interest of the United States in maintaining a Drone base inside Ethiopia to kill and maim its opponents like Al Shebab in Somalia or AlQaida in the Arabian peninsula. The minority government is also taking advantage of the War on Terror to its own benefit in black mailing its opponent using terror laws to suppress or weaken them inside or outside the country.

So the previous two administrations, the Emperor and the Derg, never used Ethnic administration during their rule in Ethiopia but they had their shortcoming that some regions were under represented in so many ways. For instance the people of Tigrai in Northern Ethiopia were denied economic and educational opportunities, the region was systematically starved of any investment, the region was the most impoverished, frequently affected by famine and drought, power was mainly in the hands of the ruling Amhara elites. To add salt to the wound, the Derg also used to mock the Tigreans in saying that the only thing they own was one Grinding Milling machine. To prove his heartlessness and determination to crush his enemies, he bombed the Tigreayan town of Hawzien in January 1988 using Ethiopian Air force fighter Jets targeting and maiming civilian population in an open market killing more than 200 people. The resentment against Mengistu soared that the Tigreyans felt humiliated, burdened, maimed, killed with out any justification. Then they rebelled against their central governments by actively pursuing their armed struggle for some kind of self rule against the two regimes for their political and human rights.

As a result they speed up their armed struggle cooperating with the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF). Therefore we, the Eritreans and the Tigreain Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF), cooperated militarily together and brought down the dictatorship of Mengistu Hailemariamin 1991. This happened so quickly that once Eritreans was liberated from any Ethiopian rule, the Eritrean Tank brigade moved swiftly towards Ethiopia to help our then comrades in arms who quickly took control of the Ethiopian capital and deposed the crazy dictator. Immediately afterwords the Tigreyan were firmly enthroned to seize power in Addis Abbaba with the help of us.. Eritreans. Once they are firmly in full control of Ethiopia the present minority government of Ethiopia introduced the so called ethnic federalism with aim of reducing conflicts, and giving powers to the regions. However power is firmly embedded in the hands of the Tigreyan minority government especially economic, military, financial institutions at least for the moment.

The thinking behind their philosophy of ethnic federalism is to promote the interest of the ethnic groups by providing them significant powers to run their regions by themselves. Ethiopia is now ruled by EPRDF a coalition of liberation movement leaders and other ethnic groups, but evidence show that the TPLF are the most single and important decision making body in Ethiopia. They have veto power on any legislation they want to implement, they can declare war on their enemies and pass legislation at their Parliament. And the hidden agenda is to stay in office as long as possible. After all the ethnic chiefs selected by the central government in Ethiopia to administer the regions will have no choice but to toe the line of the minority leadership or loose power. It should also be noted that the population of Ethiopia is75-80 million and the Tigreyans are between 4-5 million, this simply means the Tigreyans represent almost 5-6 % of the Ethiopian population while the rest 94% the majority are governed by that minority.

The biggest ethnic group in Ethiopia are the Oromos, followed by the Amharas and the rest of other ethnic communities. The arithmetic tells us that if the Tigreyans represent only 6% of the population, one may ask why would they, the minority Tigreyans have control of the whole country? Of course the ruling party would like us to believe that power has been extended to regions using ethnic policy, but as you can see from the list below, all the names listed in high strategic posts are Tigreyans and have the strangle hold of power in Ethiopia whether the Amhara or the Oromos like it or not. That the Tigreyans are in complete control of the 90% of the top posts in Ethiopia, be it Economic, Military, Foreign office and the entire command and control center of the nations armed forces are all Tigreyans. At times they may put people of different ethnic groups in a good position as a gesture of politics but their deputies are definitely Tigreyan to keep an eye on them and the list below is testimony that power is firmly in the hands of the Tigreyan minority of Northern Ethiopia.

Current Ethiopian Army by Ethnic Tigrean officers

High Ranking Military Officials Principal Defense Departments (Woyane)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | Job Division | Name & Rank | Ethnic Group |
| 1  | Armed Forces Chief-of-Staff | General Smora Yenus | Tigre |
| 2 | Armed Forces Head of Training | Lt.General Tadesse Worde | Tigre |
| 3 | Head of Logistics | Lt.General Gezae Abera | Tigre |
| 4 | Head of Intelligence | Br. General Gebre Dela | Tigre |
| 5 | Armed Forces Head of Campaign | Major General Gebreegzher | Tigre |
| 6 | Armed Forces Head of Engineering | Lt.General Berhane Negash | Tigre |
| 7 | Chief of the Air Force | Chief of the Air Force | Tigre |

Heads of the Nation’s four Military Commands (Woyane)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | Job Division | Name & Rank | Ethnic Group |
| 1  | Central Command  | General Abebaw Tadesse | Agew |
| 2 | Northern Command | Lt.General Saere Mekonene  | Tigre |
| 3 | South Eastern Command | Lt.General Abraha Wolde | Tigre |
| 4 | Western Command | Br. General Seyoum Hagos | Tigre |

Army Divisional Commanders (Woyane)

Central Command (Woyane)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | Job Division | Name & Rank | Ethnic Group |
| 1  | 31st Army Division | Colonel Tsegaye Marx | Tigre |
| 2 | 33rd Army Division | Colonel Kidane | Tigre |
| 3 | 35th Army Division | Colonel Misganaw Alemu | Tigre |
| 4 | 24th Army Division  | Colonel Work Aynu | Tigre |
| 5 | 22nd Army Division | Colonel Dikul | Tigre |
| 6 | 8th Mechanized Division | Colonel Jamal Mohammed | Tigre |

Northern Command (Woyane)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | Job Division | Name & Rank | Ethnic Group |
| 1  | 14st Army Division | Colonel Wodi Antiru | Tigre |
| 2 | 21st Army Division | Colonel Gueshi Gebre | Tigre |
| 3 | 11th Army Division | Colonel Workidu | Tigre |
| 4 | 25th Army Division | Colonel Tesfay Sahiel | Tigre |
| 5 | 22nd Army Division | Colonel Teklay Klashin | Tigre |
| 6 | 4th Mechanized Division | Colonel Hinsaw Giorgis | Tigre |

South Eastern Command (Woyane)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | Job Division | Name & Rank | Ethnic Group |
| 1  | 19st Army Division | Colonel Wodi Guaae | Tigre |
| 2 | 44st Army Division | Colonel Zewdu Tefera | Tigre |
| 3 | 13th Army Division | Colonel Sherifo | Tigre |
| 4 | 12th Army Division | Colonel Mulugeta Berhe | Tigre |
| 5 | 32nd Army Division | Colonel Abraha Tselim | Tigre |
| 6 | 6th Mechanized Division | Colonel G/Medhin Fekede | Tigre |

Western Command (Woyane)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | Job Division | Name & Rank | Ethnic Group |
| 1  | 23rd Army Division | Colonel Wolde Belalom | Tigre |
| 2 | 43rd Army Division | Colonel Wodi Abate | Tigre |
| 3 | 26th Army Division | Colonel Mebrahtu | Tigre |
| 4 | 7th Mechanized Division | Colonel Gebre Mariam | Tigre |

Commanders in Different Defense Departments (Woyane)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | Job Division | Name & Rank | Ethnic Group |
| 1  | Agazi Commando Division | B.General Mohammed Esha | Tigre |
| 2 | Addis Ababa & Surrounding Area Guard | Colonel Zenebe Amare | Tigre |
| 3 | Palace Guard | Colonel Gerensay | Tigre |
| 4 | Banking Guard | Colonel Hawaz Woldu | Tigre |
| 5 | Engineering College | Colonel Halefom Eggigu | Tigre |
| 6 | Military Health Science | B.General Tesfay Gidey | Tigre |
| 7 | Mulugeta Buli Technical College | Colonel Meleya Amare | Tigre |
| 8 | Resource Management College | Colonel Letay | Tigre |
| 9 | Siftana Command College | B.General Moges Haile  | Tigre |
| 10 | Blaten Military Training Center | Colonel Salih Berihu | Tigre |
| 11 | Wourso Military Training Center | Colonel Negash Heluf | Tigre |
| 12 | Awash Arba Military Training Center | Colonel Muze | Tigre |
| 13 | Birr Valley Military Training Center | Colonel Negassie Shikortet | Tigre |
| 14 | Defense Administration Department | B.General Mehari Zewde | Tigre |
| 15 | Defense Aviation | B.General Kinfe Dagnew | Tigre |
| 16 | Defense Research and Study | B.General Halefom Chento | Tigre |
| 17 | Defense Justice Department | Colonel Askale | Tigre |
| 18 | Secretary of the Chief-of-Staff  | Colonel Tsehaye Manjus | Tigre |
| 19 | Indoctrination Center | B.General Akale Asaye | Amhara |
| 20 | Communications Department | Colonel Sebbhat | Tigre |
| 21 | Foreign Relations Department | Colonel Hassene | Tigre |
| 22 | Special Forces Coordination Department | B.General Fisseha Manjus | Tigre |
| 23 | Operations Department  | Colonel Wodi Tewk | Tigre |
| 24 | Planning, Readiness and Programming Department | Colonel Teklay Ashebir | Tigre |
| 25 | Defense Industries Coordination Department | Colonel Wodi Negash | Tigre |
| 26 | Defense Finance Department | Colonel Zewdu | Tigre |
| 27 | Defense Purchasing Department | Colonel Gedey | Tigre |
| 28 | Defense Budget Department | Ato/Mr. Berhane | Tigre |

More over the present rulers of Ethiopia claim to share power with the other ethnic groups, it is a smoke screen to hide their rule as a minority. We all know power is still in the hands of the Tigreyan minority, because all the military financial, economic institution are tightly in their hands, they are in the driving seat and they are the ones who are guiding Ethiopia. They select leaders to run ethnic regions the way the Tigreyans want it to be managed and as Berhanu Balcha, an Ethiopian academic put it, the main reason for the Minority government of Ethiopia to excessively empower ethnic groups is simply to co opt elites from various ethnic groups who have not made an effective resistance against the dominance of the Tigreyan elites in the Ethiopian state. In other words the academic said it very clear that the minority government has not been honest in implementing genuine ethnic federalism because real power is still exercised by them.

Finally, as they say, what goes up must come down, the minority government of Ethiopia has gone up and up and the sky has been the limit. It is quite strange that the minority government seem to be believing its own propaganda that at least for the moment. The fact of the matter is that ethnic rule is divisive and so far they have managed to buy off a lot of people, nevertheless many are not happy and one day there will be ethnic conflict in Ethiopia. Of course it may not be on the scale of other African countries, but there is an ethnic time bomb waiting to explode after their 24th May election so long as the minority government are ruling over the majority. So the view from many people that I have spoken is that the minority government has over stayed its welcome and they say there will be an avalanche of spontaneous revolution starting from the epicenter of Addis spreading to other towns in Ethiopia and it will have significant spill over for the rest of country.

In short Ethiopia may face what Egypt faced that, Mubarak ruled Egypt with a tight grip for almost 30 years and was ousted in February 2011 by a volcano of human eruption. So what future does it hold for the minority government and the rest of Ethiopia. My personal view is that ethnic rule is doomed to fail and the future would definitely looks very bleak, because the minority government in Ethiopia would end up falling from power like its predecessors and the future for Ethiopia and especially for the people of Tigreyans after 24th of may election of 2015 remains bleak and it will certainly lead into post electoral violence. In which Minority governments property and business will be at risk.

**PART NINE TO FOLLOW**

**LONDON 17th OF MAY 2015**