

### **EPRDF: TPLF's Cloak of Ethiopian Identity**

In previous articles, we had seen that the TPLF, under the 'Manifesto 68', had initially set out with Tigrayan independence in mind. But finding little outside support, and particularly due to the EPLF's insistence that the Tigrayan question could only be resolved within a united Ethiopia, the clique had been forced to develop a twin-edged and confused approach. Despite the TPLF's claims that its objective is to 'secure the Tigrayan people's right to self-determination', its narrow-minded separatist intentions had continued to grow under the covers and had greatly influenced the regime's decision making process after it gained power. Based on this twin-edged approach, before coming to power, the TPLF had on top of its hidden agenda outlined a crude and fake political program regarding a united Ethiopia and established small satellite organizations that would supposedly represent other Ethiopian ethnic groups. The TPLF then brought together these small organizations to form its own version of a united front and named it the EPRDF. Hence, the EPRDF was not formed as per the initiative of the member organizations but is a cloak of disguise weaved by the TPLF to hide its true agenda. After gaining control in Addis Ababa through military force, the TPLF/ EPRDF established a seemingly Ethiopian government by incorporating the afore-mentioned satellite organizations and other opposition groups, and in 1992 drafted a constitution that suited its narrow interests. Looking at the regime's actions directly after it gained power, it is easy to see that they reflect the thus far hidden objectives outlined in the 'Manifesto 68'. The following points clearly confirm the above stated fact:

1. As is generally known, the new Ethiopian constitution drafted by the EPRDF/TPLF allows different Ethiopian ethnic groups "the right to self-determination up to secession". This Article of the constitution was included not to provide other oppressed Ethiopian ethnic groups an independent choice but rather to put a legal cover on the anti-Ethiopian unity objectives of the 'Manifesto 68'. Exploiting the Ethiopian people's wealth for as long as possible until the time came for seceding the Tigrayan province, the TPLF, ever since coming to power, has been busy paving the way for its ludicrous plan.
2. The TPLF/EPRDF had introduced the federal mode of administration for the sole objective of weakening Ethiopian nationalism and encouraging sub-national sentiments. The regime had divided Ethiopia into different regions on the basis of ethnicity so as to break up the Ethiopian people's unity and thereby paralyze any potential opposition.
3. In defining the borders of the various Ethiopian regions, the regime had directly applied the expansionist objectives outlined in the 'Manifesto 68'. Thus, the borders of Tigray region were stretched to the Alowha River to the south, Welkait and Tselemti were included to the west, and some parts of the Afar territories were also added. Except for occupying parts of Eritrean land and sea, all the other necessary steps towards establishing the Tigrayan Republic had been taken.
4. We had seen at the beginning of this article that the TPLF had from the start set out to exploit the oppressed Tigrayan people's struggle for its own political and economic interests. The first economic steps the regime had taken after coming to power had been to drain

Ethiopian wealth towards Tigray province by setting up large corporations under the management of its highest-ranking leaders under the pretext of 'oppressed groups of people deserve preferential treatment' as is outlined in the new Ethiopian constitution. However, none of the oppressed Tigrayan people had benefited from this blatant exploitation of Ethiopian wealth except the TPLF leaders' family and relations. This attests to the fact that the TPLF had used the Tigrayan people as a tool for securing power and wealth but had no concern whatsoever for their welfare. Hence, this faction is not Ethiopian, nor is it Tigrayan despite originating from among them. In fact this regime is quite a stranger to the Tigrayan people.

In the past 16 years of TPLF leadership, the Tigrayan and Ethiopian people as a whole had seen the regime use the just cause of the Tigrayan people for its own interests, gain power at the expense of their sacrifice and single-mindedly pursue its own individual economic and political gains. The regime had betrayed the Tigrayan people's cause and martyrdom and exploited the Ethiopian people's wealth so as to build its dream Republic. Unfortunately for the TPLF, however, the dream had remained just a dream. Its sinister schemes to instigate division and conflict among the Ethiopian people had backfired. Since things don't always work out as planned, the steps the regime had taken to secure its narrow interests had served in shortening its stay in power. This clique that created chaos in a nation through antiquated politics is then now hovering on the brink of its final hours. Since it had in the first place come to power by betraying a popular cause, the regime is an orphan group that will find none to commiserate with it after its demise. The TPLF has already fallen into the hole it dug for itself through its sinister ways and it won't be long before it receives the final deathblow.