

In the middle of the 20th century with the end of European colonialism during which many African countries gained independence, conditions in the Horn region were further exacerbated during that time, tossing the region into further instability. Here examples such as that of Eritrea, in which an illegal occupation became the cause of an elongated war for independence, and the case of Ogaden, which became the cause of conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia could be cited as case in point.

Even though, with the exception of the above mentioned examples, all the other problems that riled the region found their root in narrow-minded and shallow politics. For example, the political and armed struggle of the peoples of Ethiopia (Tigray, Oromo, Afar, Somalia and others), all the coups and the civil war in Sudan, the failure of Somalia as a state and all that havoc it caused, the dictatorship of Idi-Amin in Uganda, the Rwandan genocide and the internal turmoil in the states of Kenya and Djibouti, all these trace their roots to narrow politics and nepotisms. This in turn has become the cause of so much instability for over half a century on top of being a hurdle that held back the people of this region and made them waste so many golden opportunities. This turmoil was further heightened by external interference in this region.

For all the above cited reasons, the Horn region is being held back from progress and development, as it is impossible to implement development schemes that are beneficial for everyone around when African nations are still being ruled by nepotistic regimes who shape their policies upon favoritism. For this reason we see African nations being exploited and swindled out of their resources by every dynasty that manages to seize power. To make matters worse, African nations which employ the largely unsafe rain based agriculture have been exposed to numerous counts of famine and draught. The people of this region have been exposed to hunger, famine, poverty, backwardness as well as migration.

His Excellency, the President of the State of Eritrea, Isaias Afewerki, on the numerous interviews he conducted with different media outlets regarding himself and his family, outlined much of the image of nations in our region as well as other nations. In his reply, the President said that “the reason why there’s so much strife over the concept of democracy is because nations are being practically run by family dynasties that seize power. In fact, some nations are effectively owned by family dynasties, even though they are still identified by their nominal names. Governments are controlled and run by these familial dynasties. We do not wish to have such a system, and we shall never allow such a system to be created here. We would not allow the supremacy of a family or groups over the majority of the population.”

The status quo that prevails in our region as well as elsewhere in Africa is just like what President Isaias Afewerki has described. If we take the history of Ethiopia which has a population of over 80 million as a case in point, it magnifies the truth of the matter.

In the process of establishment of the Ethiopian nation, it was well documented that Menelik of

Shoa, conspiring with the European colonial forces and with the arms support he received from them forcefully annexed small and large ethnic groups living in northern part of Shoa and further to the south and west with different socio-economic strata and different languages.

It is known that the concept of a nation-state was something that came during the mercantilist era. Even though Menelik has successfully managed to forge a state, the policies he ensued were feudalistic. Hence, after he created the Ethiopian empire, he made sure that all positions of power and politics as well as all land were controlled by the Royal Family and the feudal. This made the Ethiopian masses effective subjects of the crown. And since all resources belonged to the Royal Family, one family managed to control every aspect of the state. This system continued well up to the reign of Emperor Haileslasie.

Nonetheless, it was unthinkable for the Royal family to control all resources and means of production forever. Hence, in order to keep the status quo and guarantee its grip of power, they had to make a deal with external forces. Case in point is the willingness of Emperor Haileslasie to become a willing tool for the Americans. However, as foreign backing-up could not carry on forever, and because of all the simmering anger and civil unrest in Ethiopia, Emperor Haileslasie was toppled from power in 1974. Even though, there was a visible absence of a representing force in Ethiopia, and this vacuum was exploited by the military officers clique called the Derg. The Derg was initially a group of low ranking non commissioned officers who represented different regiments and came together as part of the public unrest under the claim that the salary of the army be increased.

Ahadu Sabure, in his *Yezemenachn Tarik* (our time's history), describes the Derg as follows. The junta, which seized power promising that they will bring about a reign of prosperity, progress and development started showing their true colors in the third month of their ascendancy. They showed what a mind that has already been polluted with ignorance, hatred, grudge and revenge-seeking, on top of gluttony and arrogance is capable of. People to have been known for their drunkenness, misconduct and brawls in the army, people who had no idea about compassion and justice came together in the seat of power and passed death sentences upon their victims. This shall not be forgotten by History.

What could the people and the nation expect from such a junta if they seize power? Members of the Derg, who initially numbered about 120, failed to comprehend each other let alone work for the wellbeing of the nation. Hence, in no time they were at each other's throats. And finally, power started belonging to one individual. Ethiopia, under Colonel Mengistu Hailemariam became a nation that he directed unto whatever direction he wanted, in a gross disregard for all lawful means of running a state. However, as political dynasties and family politics finally must face the judgment of the masses, after he committed numerous atrocities and causing much havoc, when the time for him came he fled the country.