

# opinion

## Ethiopia in reality: ORANACC's view

Ethiopia is one of the least developed African countries situated in the horn of Africa. Its immediate neighbors are: Sudan from west, Kenya from south, Somalia and Djibouti from east and the Red Sea from north. The boundaries of Ethiopia were demarcated, as were most African countries by the European colonizers - international colonialism - and by internal colonialism which have persisted for well over a century. Thus, Ethiopia is a conglomeration of different tribes, hereafter referred to as Nations. There is no exact figure as to the number of the different Nations in the colonial empire of Ethiopia. Their number, however is estimated to be over 80.

For reasons not very clear, Ethiopia has been portrayed in the world in a very distorted manner. Two examples may suffice to substantiate this fact: First, Ethiopia is said to be a "Christian Island." This indeed is blatant scientific lie which most authors have emphasized. All the different Nations of Ethiopia have had their own religions, be it Moslem, paganism or others. They also have their own technology, culture and language. Perhaps the only Christian Nation is the Amhara, the colonizers. As is the case in like situations, after colonizing the different Nations, the Amharas were trying very hard to Amharanize the other Nations. This is to say that they imposed their language, culture and religion on the other Nations. It is known that the Amharas were able to colonize, use the natural and human resources and impose their own way of life on the others by the help of the Europeans who were in Africa during the "scramble for Africa."

From the above simplified analysis it is easy to see that Ethiopia is not a Christian Island. Those

people who have done armchair research and those who had visited Ethiopia should come to accept the reality which have eluded them in the past.

The second example I would like to resort to is the so often used statement, "Ethiopia has been independent for the last 3,000 years." From the above mentioned, one could easily see that this is not so. How can Ethiopia be independent while itself is a colonial country where there has been no basic human rights? Perhaps the proponents of this statement were referring to the international colonialism. It is true that in this sense Ethiopia has not been colonized by the Europeans. If this is what is being referred to one has to mention, rather emphasize, the existence of internal colonialism and the dynamics of Ethiopian Nations. At any rate, the statement may not be right. Thus, the above two statements are myth than reality intended to mislead the peoples of the world. Incidentally, the same has happened to many other Nations in Africa, Asia and elsewhere around the world.

The main focus of this article is on the current deplorable political conditions in which all the Nations of Ethiopia find themselves.

In the last half a century Ethiopia saw two dictators, though diametrically opposed to one another. Haile Selassie and Mengistu Haile Mariam. The former, ex-king was ousted in 1974 by a military coup after ruling Ethiopia with an iron hand for 44 years. Under his rule Ethiopia made negligible economic progress. One may not expect economic progress while Haile Selassie himself, and the people around him were piling money in foreign banks and while foreign owned firms were repatriating their enormous profits. In a word, Haile Selassie's government was not conducive to economic development and human progress.

Many Ethiopians went into raptures when the news about Haile Selassie's dethronement was heralded. This, however, was short lived as Mengistu Haile Mariam's government is worse in most cases than that of the ex-king's. Haile Mariam, it could be said, the son of Idi Amin and grandson of Hitler. What had happened to his father, Amin is in store for him despite the socialist countries direct material and personnel help to keep him in power to further torture and murder innocent people.

After Ethiopia came under the so called "Socialist countries" sphere of influence led by Russia and its satellite, Cuba, basic human rights deteriorated significantly. Ethiopia has now adopted a photocopy of Russia's political ideology. As it is evident, there is no such a thing as human rights in Russia. Thus, one cannot expect its satellites to have sound human rights. This is reflected in the current exodus of Cuban, Ethiopian and other Russian satellite countries' refugees.

Ethiopian refugees are now the largest in Africa putting serious economic strain on the neighboring countries: Sudan, Somalia, Kenya and Djibouti. The problem of refugees is now a serious concern to those countries. The Sudan, for example, realizing the grave hardship of the refugees organized a conference on refugees in July of 1980 in its capital Kaartoum and declared 1980 "The year of refugees in Sudan." Several governments, inter-governmental and humanitarian organizations as well as interest groups attended the conference.

Now there are 440,000 refugees in Sudan. 390,000 of these are from Ethiopia composed of the different ethnic origins. It is hard for a Third World country like the Sudan to properly accommodate all these refugees without international aid.

There are over 1,200,000 refugees in the fifth poorest country of the world, Somalia. These are mostly Somalians from Ogaden - Ethiopia - and Oromos from Oromia - Ethiopia. Their condition is described to be extremely bad by CBC in its September 7, 1980 broadcast.

Unfortunately CBC did not mention the problem of Oromo refugees. It paid particular attention to the Somali refugees only. As always in a refugee situation it is the children who are most vulnerable.

The aid obtained from international community is not adequate. More food, clothing, shelter and medical care are still called for.

There are 20,000 Ethiopian refugees in Djibouti and over 2,000 in Kenya. Most of these are from Oromia fled to these countries to escape torture and possible execution. People of all ages and both sexes are found in the refugee campus.

In view of the past, Oromo Relief Association Canada America Chapter (ORANACC) calls upon all humanitarian organizations, churches, interest groups and individuals to seriously consider the problem of Oromo refugees in the neighboring countries of Ethiopia. For reasons not very clear, the problems of Oromo refugees has not obtained international attention. This however, does not mean the problem is less severe. Thus, ORANACC invites all to assist in alleviating the suffering of the refugees who are left in a "desperate and hopeless plight." Some of the commodities that the refugees urgently need for existence are: food, medicine, clothing shelter and etc.

Ayana Nephtalem  
for ORANACC

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