

Some Remarks on Policy & the Contemporary Ethiopian Muslim Movement



The religious and ideological magnitude of Wahhabism, which may fully reach Ethiopia soon, with all its facets, has its core substance in the Saudi State with its entire political, military and economic power base.¹⁾

The economic power has managed to reach Ethiopia long ago, by proxy of the economic empire of Al Amoudi and its entanglement in the Ethiopian state since 1991. The religious indoctrination and the cultural infiltration of Ethiopia, especially within the traditional moderate and tolerant, more Sufism oriented Muslim community of Ethiopia ²⁾³⁾ ^{ii iii}, has already taken root, peacefully, way back before the political movement of the Muslims has been initiated some two years ago. It has reached now its summit with some mature aspiration of its political objectives, non-violent strategic methods and tactics of struggle (“Dimtsachin Yisema / ድምጻችን ይሰማ” – a basic human rights demand, Freedom to Political prisoners etc.).

The Ethiopian orthodox Christians ⁴⁾ ^{iv} and other religious affiliations were/are either not aware of the dynamics of the movement or they are in a lethargic mood of observation, retribution, political helplessness, indifference or busy with their own sects delegitimizing each other (Hyperactive in the strife, in particular the US based Pentecostalism, encouraged and indirectly promoted by the State itself to weaken the traditional indigenous Orthodox Church and clergy, in search of a new apolitical religious mass base). They – the Christians- are lagging far behind in assuming their moral and social power and articulating their interests and freedom from the state. Without any contribution to the dynamics of the religious mass movement for civil rights, Christians as social institutions seem to make no political difference in the Ethiopian society (at least today and at home; in the diaspora condition are somehow different but contested. Remember the role of the church in former communist countries like East Germany and Poland etc.). “Dimstachin Yisema / ድምጻችን ይሰማ!” is however a mass movement for civil rights, by which the struggle of the Muslim community can really be characterized today. - A status attained in due course of its development. The participation imperative of the other religious communities in this mass

movement with their own agendas, is of course by no means, NOT to instigate a condition of conflict (like what the Ethiopian regime was doing and aspiring to do) but to build up a social solidarity and establish a working political status quo of equilibrium to contain the “would-be” dominant role of the political wing (specially the Salafist oriented section 5)^v of the Muslim movement, which would otherwise sometime in the future, be in a position to dictate its own political priorities. In the best case, these priorities can be limited to a secular political agenda, with the introduction of structural and institutional changes to consolidate their civil rights of worship conditions; but in the worst case they can however sum up to an aspiration of a militant religious political state, informed and/or dictated by an Islamic-ideology emanating out of Wahhabism, in whatever form that may be manifested (for instance, to the extent of declaring Sharia etc. by the Wahhabist-Salafist section).

Ethiopia can draw a lot of lessons from the Arab Spring and the Egypt experience on the dynamics of such mass movements, by working and hoping for a healthier outcome, with their democratic and social justice aspirations fulfilled within a peaceful and tolerant social environment. Any policy which is conducive to a religious-political civil war scenario, right from the beginning, is deadly for Ethiopia.

However, today, the Ethiopian regime, is on the contrary, working hard to contain the dynamics of the movement, with an ulterior purpose of consolidating the Tigray-ethnic dominance in the legacy Ethiopian state, while actually preparing for, in the worst case, the inauguration of the disintegration of the Ethiopian state, with a strategic objective of declaring independence for the northern region, under whatever banner and signification (it may even be called Ethiopia, as commented by one insider). On the other hand, it is as well working, for its favorable best case, to draw a political legitimacy out of the condition, to remain in power for long within the contemporary political constellation of the Ethiopian state, with its one-party-one-ethnic-dominant system ... In their perception, this condition will at least last, until the armed liberation struggle generation of Tigray (TPLF, The Bereket-Abay-Debre-Tsion and co.) is consummated. To this effect, it is thus in the double edge interest of the present regime to follow a policy of escalating the religious conflict, be it within the Muslim and Christian community or the Christians versus the Muslims .

The regime has in other words a much vested interest in proceeding along the policy of galvanizing the possible radicalization process of the so-far astounding peaceful Muslim movement, by taking hardline measures dismissing all political negotiations which were long due to restore a peaceful working state-community relation. This is all the more manifested in the latest hard-line assault of its security and military forces during the celebration of Eid Al’Fetir 2013 causing several killings, casualties and all sorts of human rights violations. According to the indications made during an interview with the PM (August 10, 2013; rather a monotonous monologue and a prelude to a possible declaration of a sort of state of emergency) after and during these casualties, these sorts of measures i.e. quasi, a state of emergency would presumably extend over all opposition political forces, which were giving support and solidarity to legitimate civil-rights demands of the Muslim community. And moreover, it is indicated that, the state is planning to stage a "Christian" religious counter protest, to the effect and with the purpose of the ultimate deconstruction of the centuries old modus Vivendi 6)^{vi} of the Ethiopian Muslim and Christian communities! Not only between Christians and Muslims but within the Muslim community itself, with the state promoting and preferring one or the other orientation! -Notably the Al-Ahbash sector.

This is the beginning of the state of disaster for the Ethiopian State.

Is it here far-fetched to question, whether there is an unholy tacit alliance, if not real, in this objective, between the dominant section of the Ethiopian state today, and the economic empire of Al Amoudi (not only the Saudi Wahhabi Proxy, a la' Al Amoudi but also EFFORT, the business empire of TPLF)? 7)^{vii}

Given this constellation, it may not be surprising to see a radical nationalist Oromo Movement reviving again these days. An Oromo nationalist movement, which is so keen and fast to reincarnate the so-far civil-rights movement of the Muslim community as an Oromo nationalist force, in the eventual due preparation of the other state, south of the northern one, along the course of the deconstructing process of the classic Ethiopian state! What is all the more embarrassing is the fact that the new state of mind of some of the outspoken mouthpiece of the Oromo community came at this time and juncture, today, after witnessing, some months before, in the aftermath of the late dictator Melese Zenawi, the encouraging spirit of cooperation and the readiness in some old Oromo veteran corners, to abandon the cessation objective of OLF.

This seems, I presume, all in all to be the scheme of the enemies of Ethiopia in alliance with their foreign forces. It only remains to ask, who are actually the driving forces behind all these moments and vectors of socio-political forces? In other words, is the Ethiopian State already "out-sourced"; years before its "failed state" status is attained? – "Out-sourced" to an "invisible" alliance of the two future contending political-religious foreign instances, with their surrogates in disguise, designated today, to slowly convert and root out the traditional indigenous system of faiths in the Christian and Muslim community of Ethiopia, in preparation for a new political social order of the region! 8)^{viii}

Like the "Bandira Cherk new/ባንዲራ ጨርቅ ነው/ " credo; "What is the cultural value of Aksum and Gondar for Wolayita/ የአክሱምና ጎንደር ሥልጣን ለወላይታ ምኑ ነው?"; is what would be recalled from the several "coming out" of the late PM, the "visionary leader"! Mind you, his heir, the New PM is also from Wolayita, in accordance with the perception of the "visionary leader". And true to the vision", he is diligent to qualify himself in the deconstruction of the Ethiopian state! The Wise old Man from Dorze/Southern Region/SNNPR, Wondimu Chubero/አቶ ወንድሙ ጨበሮ, who insisted to teach his children Amharic in his region, mentioned in Tesfaye Gebre Ab 's Book, "Yegazetegnaw Mastawesha/ የጋዜጠኛው ማስታወሻ" will be for sure very annoyed by the service-record of the PM from his region.

AND, that Ethiopia is going to be a failed "State" in the coming decades has already been declared by the "scholars" of the corresponding allied forces!

It is High Time WE WAKE UP!
Long Live Ethiopia

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- 1) ⁱ [*Religion and Politics in Saudi Arabia* - Lynne Rienner Publishers](#)
 - 2) ⁱⁱ Within the Muslim community the 'revivalists' or 'reformists' rant against the mainstream, Sufist-oriented Islam in Ethiopia, thereby advocating a purist and dogmatic form of Islam tending toward hegemonism and intolerance of others. ([JON ABBINK*African Affairs, 110/439, 253–274](#))
 - 3) ⁱⁱⁱ Sheikh Abdallahibn Muhammad al Harari, the leader of Sufist-oriented Islam and principled advocate of religious coexistence and EthiopianIslam,²³and Sheikh Yusuf 'Abd al-Rahman, a Saudi-Arabia-trained Salafist-Wahhabist-leaning leader.²⁴ While they both lived outside Ethiopia for long periods, at times banned by the government, they inspired a new round of 'verbal warfare' in the 1990s about their respective approaches to Islam, both based in Islamic theology. Sheikh Abdallah had built up an important civic-religious movement in Lebanon after his exile, but retained influence in Ethiopia through his many writings, while Sheikh Yusuf also continued to influence events in Ethiopia (notably in the Muslim education system and in the turn to Salafist' reform movements') from his home base in Saudi Arabia. Their rivalry can also be seen as a religious polemic on specific points of Islamic doctrine, ²⁵ and remained important throughout the post-1991 period. Many Islamic polemical exchanges in Ethiopia hence still move between the two poles of this debate. (ibid)
 - 4) ^{iv} Within the Christian part of the population there is also a shift from Orthodox (now (2007)43.5 percent of the Ethiopian population, a decrease compared to the 1994 census), to Evangelicalism-Pentecostalism (now 18.6 percent). Compared to 1994, Muslims increased by 1.1 percent to a total of 33.9 percent (ibid)
 - 5) ^v ibid / Further Research papers on Islam & Muslims in Africa; here Ethiopia:
<http://muslimsinafrica.wordpress.com/category/islam-and-muslims-in-ethiopia/>
 - 6) ^{vi} <http://muslimsinafrica.wordpress.com/2013/02/28/transformations-of-islam-and-communal-relations-in-wallo-ethiopia-professor-jan-abbink/>
 - 7) ^{vii} [*Religion and Politics in Saudi Arabia* - Lynne Rienner Publishers](#)
 - 8) ^{viii} ibid & See "Religion in Public Spaces Emerging Muslim-Christian Polemics in Ethiopia (Jon Abbink, African Affairs 110/439 , 253-274
<http://afraf.oxfordjournals.org/content/110/439/253.short>
<http://muslimsinafrica.wordpress.com/2013/02/28/religion-in-public-spaces-emerging-muslim-christian-polemics-in-ethiopia-professor-jon-abbink/>