

# Genocide is Alive and Well in Africa

*The Oromo war against Ethiopian nationalists and ethnic Amhara peoples is driven by small extremist groups, supported by foreign governments. But it is virulent and gaining traction. Moreover, its impact is strategic.*

**G**ENOCIDE, A 20TH CENTURY TERM<sup>2</sup> but a practice as old as humanity, has undergone numerous interpretations and many names. It has a strategic impact well beyond its emotional and ethical aspects.

It is not just a weapon of governments — although they have the most power to wield it — but of extremist movements. Often, both combine to achieve their goals.

It can be called ethnic cleansing, *umvolkung*<sup>3</sup>, or ethnomorphosis, but the effects are just the same: to eradicate, drive out, or render meaningless a society on the basis of its culture, ethnicity, language, or cohesive identity.

Today, it is being weaponized and waged by the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC) and other radical movements within Ethiopia, but operating with elements from the global diaspora of Oromo peoples. It is supported by other extremist Oromotic and Tigrean

groups, as well as by the Egyptian Government<sup>4</sup> as a tool of proxy warfare.

However, significantly, this campaign does not reflect the view of most Oromo people.

Significantly, the OLF/OFC genocidal terrorism is being supported by the Egyptian Government logistically and in terms of weapons, intelligence, and other means, and it is also supported by the ousted former Ethiopian leadership of the (also ethnically-driven) Tigré Popular Liberation Front (TPLF) for its own political ends.

Egypt also supports the Oromo extremists in order to break up Ethiopia and therefore eliminate a potential rival for power in the lower Red Sea; thus, it is a party to the nation-splitting genocide, despite the fact that Egypt-

tian Pres. Abdul Fatah Saeed al-Sisi formally renounced, on July 29, 2020, the use of war against Ethiopia in its dispute over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD).<sup>5</sup>

In this respect, the xenophobic and genocidal use of the OLF and OFC cadres is a form of population warfare, designed to break up, reduce, or reshape a geopolitical entity. That aspect is not a new phenomenon in Africa. However, *the Oromo radical nationalist movement presents a unique example of a global, coordinated action which is specifically genocidal and organized with extensive use of coordinated social media technologies and structures which has been undertaken outside the leadership and initiation of an established government.*

The OLF/OFC, the OLF's Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), the *Qeerroo* movement, the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia (IFLO), and other seemingly innocuous Oromo social organizations in the diaspora, specifically target — with murder, mob incitement, political terror, and other

1 Gregory Copley has written before on genocide issues and the strategic impact of such acts. These included the monograph, *Hiding Genocide: How Croatia Has Been Waging, and Winning, a Global Psychological War for the Balkans While Committing Genocide Against the Serbs* (Etna, California, 1996: The Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies), and on the genocidal variant dubbed *umvolkung*, referenced heavily in his latest book, *The New Total War of the 21st Century and the Trigger of the Fear Pandemic* (Alexandria, Virginia, 2020: the International Strategic Studies Association).

2 Raphael Lemkin (June 24, 1900-August 28, 1959), a lawyer of Polish-Jewish descent, is attributed with coining the term “genocide”, and initiating the Genocide Convention. Lemkin coined the word term in 1943 or 1944 from *genos* (Greek for family, tribe, or race) and *-cide* (Latin for killing).

3 Strategist Dr Stefan T. Possony called it ethnomorphosis, but preferred the German term, *umvolkung*: the root *volk* (people); the prefix *um* denoting change; and the ending *ung* refers to action. Ethnomorphosis or *umvolkung* would occur naturally as tribes and groups merged, and lost their original identity, but “in real life, *umvolkung* does not happen without bloodshed and the violation of most human rights”. He noted that “deliberate *umvolkung* is a major crime or set of crimes against humanity which have remained hidden only because the process may be spaced out over several generations”. Cited from Possony, Stefan T.: “Ethnomorphosis: Invisible Catastrophic Crime”, in *Plural Societies*, Autumn 1976, Vol. 7, No. 3. Published by the Foundation for the Study of Plural Societies.

4 The Egyptian Government has had a preoccupation with the potential for strategic rivalry from a strong Ethiopia since World War II, and particularly since Eritrea — the traditional *Bar Negus* (Kingdom of the North) or *Medri Bahri* (Land of the Sea) of the Ethiopian Empire — was re-grouped with Ethiopia as a result of the defeat of the Italian occupying forces in 1941 (and after a brief period of autonomy, rather than sovereignty, until 1952), and then became federated with Ethiopia and a province of Ethiopia in 1962. Egypt supported anti-Ethiopian forces in Eritrea during this Cold War period, particularly supporting elements within the majority Muslim population of the province. Eritrea is formally, at present, an Orthodox Christian-led independent state, and even some of its Orthodox Christian community worked with Egypt against the *Dergue* and Meles communist governments of Ethiopia for a period from the mid-1970s to about 2018, but this was often as antagonism toward the marxists in Addis Ababa rather than against Ethiopia as an historical umbrella concept which included Eritrea. The situation of Ethiopian and Eritrean Muslim communities *vis-à-vis* Ethiopian unity is a separate, albeit linked, phenomenon to the Oromo xenophobia, largely because of external manipulation of the Muslim communities. Some, in Ethiopia, such as the Sultanate of the Afar, have historically remained loyal to the concept of Solomonic Ethiopian unity.

5 See, Copley, Gregory: “War as a (Fatal) Diversion From Reality”, in *Defense & Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy*, 8-2020.

influence operations — the Amhara people who live beside and among the Oromo. They target them specifically for their ethnicity, language, and culture. This brings the OLF/OFC actions to very heart of the definition of genocide.

And, just as with the Nazi German genocide of the Jews in and before World War II, the motive is ostensibly to redress alleged historical grievances and oppression at the hands of the target peoples. So it was, too, with the Croatian *Ustaše* genocide aimed at Serbs during World War II. And so on.<sup>6</sup>

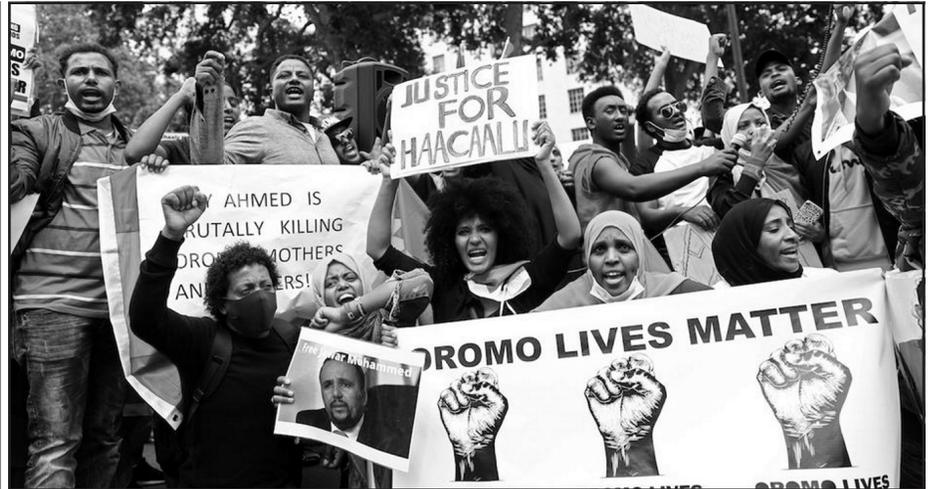
At its core, as with most such movements, it is about the seizure of territory and the eradication of perceived adversary groups. One parallel to the grassroots-based Oromo extremist movements would appear to be the “greater Albania” movement, which has used illegal migration and organized crime (at a strategic level) to consume territories outside its traditional homelands.

The “greater Albania” movement had, by 2020, succeeded in creating a new state out of territory illegally occupied from neighboring Serbia — Kosovo — removing its Serbian inhabitants, and in making significant strides to dominate or control two other existing states (Montenegro and Northern Macedonia), while also threatening to take over Albania itself.

### Always Blame the Victim

**W**HAT IS A fundamental strategy in most ethnomorphosis, genocidal, or ethnic cleansing campaigns is that the perpetrator blames the victim for the situation. In other words, the perpetrator plays the victim, while the target group is thrown onto the defensive.

The deception often backfires, but usually not until significant damage has been done. In the case of the Communist Party of China (CPC) current



Muslim, Christian, and secular Oromo youths demonstrate on July 3, 2020, outside the UK's Prime Ministerial residence, 10 Downing Street, as part of the well-orchestrated movement of expatriate Oromos to pre-emptively control the linguistic high ground of the debate against Ethiopia.

actions against the Uighur people of China's Xinjiang region, the CPC moved so draconiously and so quickly that the evidence of overwhelming state actions against a minority group were evident. The earlier (and ongoing) parallel operations against the *Falun Gong* movement adherents were ramped up more subtly.

Significantly, such xenophobia is contagious; there is a great “political correctness” to find scapegoats for perceived ills and perceived reasons for the failure of a society to achieve its historical greatness. This natural phenomenon is exploited by demagogic appeals by political movements or leaders; it is the easiest path to building cohesion and resistance to rational argument. It was particularly evident in the nationalist *versus* utopian urbanist polarization of Western societies in the current era.

New Zealand-born Australian war correspondent and author Osmar White, who covered World War II and its aftermath, noted: “Something seems to have gone wrong with the human family as a whole ... A human herd can apparently pursue a certain course of action — and pursue it with vigor and success — even though that

course of action is at variance with the conscience, desires and intelligent beliefs of the great majority of its individual members.”<sup>7</sup>

But, as with the campaigns against the Jews and Gypsies of Europe and the Serbs during World War II, the damage was done — with some permanent psychological imprinting on world attitudes — before those genocides were recognized.

In Ethiopia, the extremist Oromo actions also target those mainstream Oromos who support the retention of the Ethiopian state and other Ethiopians who defend the multi-cultural, historical Ethiopian state. In another parallel with the “greater Albania” movement, the “greater Oromia” movement has revealed itself to be the enemy of the traditional leadership of the mainstream Oromo people and the traditional region of Oromia (which could arguably now be referred to as “lesser Oromia”).

Articles II and III of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide describes two elements of the crime of genocide: *Firstly*, the mental element, meaning the “intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious

6 In Equatorial Guinea, for example, a process of *umvolkung* — in some respects “gradual genocide” — was implemented against the Bubi people who dominated in Bioko, the island of the capital, Malabo, when the Fang people of the mainland Río Muni region assumed power. There were ample, and even more profound, parallels, too, in the case of Rwanda, which this journal has covered previously, but which deserve a complete study separately. Indeed, the study of genocide in Africa — and particularly the conscious planning and execution of the phenomenon — cannot be considered without the examples of actions by both the Hutu *Interahamwe* and Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA). A significant report on this was published on April 24, 2000, as “A New Declaration Indicts Rwandan Gen. Paul Kagame to Respond, as He Assumes the Office President”, in *Defense & Foreign Affairs Daily*.

7 White, Osmar: *Conquerors' Road: An Eyewitness Report of Germany 1945*. Cambridge, UK/New York, 1996: Harper Collins/Cambridge University Press. In this regard, too, it is essential to read *Crowds and Power*, by Elias Canetti (New York, 1981: Continuum. Originally published by Claassen Verlag, Hamburg, in 1960 as *Masse und Macht*); and *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*, by Gustave Le Bon (Viking, 1960. Our edition: New York, 1896: The Macmillan Co. Originally published as *Psychologie des Foules* in 1895).

group, as such”; *Secondly*, the physical element which includes five acts (a crime must include the first and second elements to be called “genocide”)<sup>8</sup>; and *Thirdly*, Article III described five punishable forms of the crime of genocide (genocide itself, conspiracy, incitement, attempt, and complicity).

What is significant in the case of the Ethiopian genocide is that the Prime Minister of Ethiopia is himself half Oromo, and represents the Oromo wing of the new, governing national Prosperity Party and formerly headed the Oromo Democratic Party which he merged into the Prosperity Party. But Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed Ali is also half-Amhara, and his attempts to bring about a national peace in Ethiopia have been interpreted by the OLF/OFC as a declaration of war against Oromo irredentism.

As well, the President of the Ethiopian Crown Council, Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie Haile-Selassie, the grandson of Emperor Haile Selassie I, is also half Oromo and half Amhara. But — as the Yugoslav civil war of 1990-2000 showed — the blending of identities represents an even greater threat to genocidal extremists.

Such unions show that multi-identity harmony *can* be achieved, and *that* reality is the enemy of the goal espoused by the extremists who seek “ethnic” separatism.

Much of the international community became aware that the Oromo war against the Amhara was coming to a head when, on the night of June 30, 2020, a group of about 100 Oromo youth — mostly young men — destroyed a stone statue of former Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie I in Cannizaro Park in the London suburb of Wimbledon. The activity took place during the cover of a period of international street political activity generated by the US “Black Lives Matter” movement which was a specific byproduct of the US national election year.

The destruction of the statue of the Emperor followed the similar destruction of a large equestrian bronze statue of the Emperor’s father, *Ras Makonnen*, in the city of Harar. And both protests, capitalizing on the “Black Lives Matter” street violence in the US, UK,

Australia, and elsewhere, legitimized the destruction of statues symbolizing historical hierarchy.

But to trigger this highly-orchestrated street warfare, a prominent Oromo singer, Hachalu Hundessa, 34, was assassinated on the evening of June 29, 2020, in Addis Ababa. Hachalu was a strong advocate for Oromo rights and traditions, and his murder sparked pre-planned uprisings in Harar and London, and elsewhere in Ethiopia.

By July 10, 2020, less than two weeks after Hachalu’s death, the death toll from the street warfare had reached 239. But this alone did not represent the genocide. The OLF/OFC action, and the action of groups such as the *Qeerroo*. Originally, the term “*Qeerroo*” meant merely young Oromo bachelors; today it means “the vanguard of the Oromo revolution”.

What is significant is that, despite the decades of evolution of the modern *Qeerroo* movement and the “greater Oromia” concept, the nature of the trend has taken most Ethiopians by surprise, whether at home or in the diaspora. Indeed, despite the fact that radical attacks have been evident since 1972, the upsurge of the past few years seemed to have taken most mainstream Oromo by surprise.

### Historical Parallels in the Shaping of Genocidal Movements

**I**N PLACES LIKE Australia and Canada, refugee Oromos (and particularly their children, born outside Ethiopia) have organized into seemingly-sudden vitriolic and hate-organized groups.

The action in the UK to topple the Haile Selassie statue, and manifestly well-organized demonstrations in various Canadian cities and in Australia, for example, brought the Oromo movement full-blown into prominence.

And they have done so with a significant level of “public relations” capability, taking advantage of being the first on the scene to publicize their grievances. In this regard, the movements

parallel the post-Cold War Croatian *Ustaše* movement, which heavily utilized media manipulation in foreign countries to build momentum. As well, diaspora *Ustaše* youth formed the hard core of fighters which pursued the expansionist Croatian objectives when the Yugoslavia began to break up in 1990-91. With the Croatian example, as with the Oromo radical agenda, a great emphasis has been placed on employing the media to influence foreign support, or to deter foreign intervention to protect the existing structures within the target regions.

Significantly, with the post-World War II *Ustaše* movement and the modern Oromo radical movements, there are religious and political triggers. The *Ustaše* movement relied heavily on mobilizing through Croatia’s Catholicism (as opposed to Serbia’s Orthodox Christianity) and, in its post-Cold War iteration, along lines influenced politically by nationalist-socialism (nazi) principles as well as because of triggers from communist practice (as implemented by the Croatian leader of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Marshal Josip Broz (Tito). Ironically, Tito was a great admirer of Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia.

But there is little doubt, too, that the Oromo radical movements owe much of their organizational thinking to the conditioning of Soviet-backed Ethiopian marxist rulers after the coup and regicide against Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974. Certainly, the first phase of Ethiopian communism under the *Dergue* of Mengistu Haile Mariam (1974-1990) was strongly in favor of a unified Ethiopia, but it radicalized a generation of Ethiopian youth, including many young Oromos. The explosion of literacy and education created by the idealism of Emperor Haile Selassie had opened up, for the first time, the youth of Ethiopia to insatiable curiosity and a quest for social justice.

They were ripe for radicalization. And it was to cost the Emperor his life.

But it was the *second* iteration of marxism in Ethiopia — which began with the flight of Mengistu to exile and safe haven in Zimbabwe in 1990, and the assumption of power with US blessing of the TPLF under Meles

8 Article II: In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Zenawi (a radical, Albanian-style Tigrean marxist) — which set the “greater Oromia” movement running. Meles, who died in 2012 at the age of 57 (paving the way for the end of communism in Ethiopian governance), set up an ethnically-based “divide and rule” approach to Ethiopian rule.

Like Tito in Yugoslavia, he “allocated” regions to ethnic groups and encouraged their distrust of each other. Meles fueled the *Qeerroo* movement and its various allies/masters such as the OLF and the OFC needed. Under the Meles stewardship, the Oromo population surged into new territories, including the national capital, Addis Ababa, which had been created in 1886 in essentially virgin land by Emperor Menelik II. Under Meles, it was also accepted that Addis was concurrently the capital of Oromia. For the Tigrean, Meles, this was part of his own anti-Amhara xenophobia.

Certainly, Addis Ababa could not conceivably be the capital of Tigré (which was geographically remote from it). However, it was important for Meles to remove any suggestion that the national capital should in any way be part of what he (as a revolutionary, fighting against the Solomonic crown of Emperor Haile Selassie) considered to be an Amhara-centric Ethiopia. In fact, under the Solomonic emperors, Ethiopia was a melting pot of Ethiopian societies. There had been unrestrained intermarriage between Amhara, Oromo, and other Ethiopian ethnicities into the Solomonic family.

### Linguistic Roots of the Modern Oromo Secessionist Movement

THE BUILD-UP OF radical Oromo irridentism has been underway, then, for almost a half-century. The Oromo point to the gradual incorporation of Oromo lands and peoples into the Ethiopian Empire in the late 1800s.

Certainly, there had over the years been an identity issue which crystallized around perceptions of ethnicity, language, religion, and culture. Language, in particular, became a key identifier. The Oromo language, Oro-

migne, and Oromo peoples are of Hamitic and Cushitic origin, but had, during Solomonic times, been written using the Ge’ez alphabet, which provides the basis for both Amharic and Tigrigne, and is (as are its speakers) of semitic origin (*à la* Aramaic).

It was only in 1991 that Omorigne formally began to be written with a Latin alphabet (called *Qubee*). Significantly, the Latin-based written form had been taken up by Oromos in the diaspora, and particularly by the OLF in the late 1970s.<sup>9</sup> Little wonder, then, that the issue of language as an identity standpoint has become clearly engaged with the OLF message.

The OLF has now had a half-century to radicalize two generations of Oromos. What is surprising, in fact, is that it did not have an even greater penetration of the Oromo community.

One reason for the resistance to OLF-led radicalization has been because religion is another key marker of differences within the Oromo community. Most Oromo of Orthodox Christianity identify with both Ethiopian and Oromo cultures, equally proud of both. But there are Oromos of other Christian denominations, particularly Pentecostalism, who were more easily swayed away from the pan-Ethiopian identity of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Still others, particularly in areas close to Somalia, are Muslim. But even many of these — the majority it seems — are pro-Ethiopian. Some Muslims, inevitably, have been swayed by radical Islamism and by Wahhabism, which is a distinct departure from the moderate and tolerant forms of Islam practiced by, for example, the key Muslim leaders of the area (such as the Sultan of the Afar, for example).

But it was the revolutionary, secular atmosphere of the build-up and follow-on to the 1974 *coup d’etat* against Emperor Haile Selassie which has most influenced the radical movements of the Oromo people. They encouraged the surge of Oromo into Addis Ababa, and now claim it as their own, despite the reality that Emperor Menelik II had founded the city in what was regarded as *terra nullis*: no man’s land. The land grab had begun.

The radical Oromo movement has

made enormous efforts to co-opt the blank slate of international public opinion, as well as the opinion of young expatriate — and often well educated — Oromos who want to be proud of their origins. Young children and grandchildren of refugee Croatsians had similarly been co-opted in the run-up to the breakdown of Yugoslavia. The most profoundly violent of the new generation of *Ustaše* fighters flooding in to post-Tito Yugoslavia were Australians and Canadians of immigrants who had actually fled communism after 1945. And they emulated the virulently racist ideologies of the *Ustaše* fighters of the 1941-44 “Independent State of Croatia” which had been a staunch ally of nazi Germany.

The 1990-2000 Croatsians were quick to use formal public relations management firms in the UK and US to spread an entirely contrived narrative to win international support for their war against Serbs: the people against whom the *Ustaše* Croatian state of World War II had waged a genocidal campaign. And the Croats — working with radical Islamists in Bosnia-Herzegovina and supported by the Albanian movements — did indeed co-opt the psychological high ground, and that proved decisive in creating the post-conflict framework of the Balkans from about 2000 onwards. That was a psychological war built largely around television and the print media.

Similarly, the Oromo radicals are heavily invested in the media technology of the day: Internet and social media apps, as well as satellite television.

Key to this is Jawar Mohammed, 34, one of the founders of the Oromia Media Network (OMN), and an inspiration for the International Oromo Youth Association (National Youth Movement for Freedom and Democracy), which uses the over-arching epithet of *Qeerroo*. He was one of the key leaders of the 2016 Oromo protests against the then-Government of Ethiopia, and against all non-Oromo influences in the country.

Jawar Mohammed’s OMN labels itself as a non-partisan, non-profit organization to produce and disseminate citizen-driven reporting on Oromia. It

<sup>9</sup> The present written form of Omorigne is only one of a number of indigenous written forms of the language. The Sapalo script was an indigenous Oromo script invented by *Sheikh* Bakri Sapalo (1895-1980; also known by his birth name, Abubaker Usman Odaa) in the late 1950s, and used underground afterwards. Despite structural and organizational influences from Ge’ez and the Arabic script, it is a graphically-independent creation designed specifically for Oromo phonology, as noted by Wikipedia.

is a broadcasting company (satellite television) with a strong footprint on social media, with bases in Addis Ababa and the US (St. Paul, Minnesota), and with a stated budget for its US operations in 2018 of a half-million US dollars. Most of its functions are, however, outside public scrutiny.

Little wonder, then, when the mass rioting “spontaneously” broke out following the murder of singer Hachalu Hundessa on July 29, 2020, the Ethiopian Government immediately closed down the Internet across Ethiopia, and raided the offices of OMN, arresting key journalists there. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), a New York-based activist and worldwide group, immediately condemned the Government action.

Only a brief time transpired between the murder of Hachalu and the start of the “spontaneous”, well-orchestrated uprising, and the also pre-planned responses to the Government crack-down which would inevitably be triggered. Jawar Mohammed himself was arrested — along with some 3,500 protestors — in the immediate aftermath of the events.

The hundreds of deaths which followed the riots were mainly of non-Oromos or Oromo Orthodox Christians in Oromia. Ethiopian news site Borkena.com reported on August 3, 2020: “In jail after the assassination of Oromo musician Hachalu Hundessa, Jawar Mohammed has now begun highlighting his Amhara heritage in a clear effort to extricate himself from impending legal consequence for the rôle his ... OMN ... played for what a report by Minority Rights Group called ethnic cleansing [by the *Qeerroo*] in the Oromo region of Ethiopia. The attack in the region targeted non-Oromos and the followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.”

The June 29, 2020, assassination — almost certainly by the *Qeerroo* on behalf of the OLF, etc.<sup>10</sup> — was intended to be a watershed trigger in the Oromo push to destabilize the reformist Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Dr Abiy, who had become further embattled by the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on Ethiopia’s economy. But Dr Abiy had long been aware of the armed threat the

OLF and its footsoldiers posed, and the fact that they were being armed and financed not merely by funds from the diaspora Oromo communities but by the TPLF who had been maneuvered out of governance in 2018, and by the Egyptian Government.

### The Oromo Tactical Alliance With Radical Tigreans

THE TPLF IS NOW preparing new assaults on Ethiopian Government forces.

The Tigré Popular Liberation Front, which remains marxist, has a large private army — built up in parallel to the Ethiopian Armed Forces when Meles controlled the national Government — equipped with heavy armor, helicopter gunships, and US-trained special forces. The TPLF had been an effective combat force even when they had been a bush force fighting against the earlier *Dergue* administration.

Until 1990, the TPLF had been fighting merely for Tigrean secession, but when the *Dergue* collapsed with the collapse of the USSR (its main sponsor) in 1990, the TPLF found itself with two divisions of Sudanese-supplied armor in Addis Ababa. Then, with US blessing (because Washington was preoccupied with the collapse of the Soviet Union), the TPLF found itself in control of all of Ethiopia.

So now, in 2020, the TPLF and the OLF and its allies have found common cause to attack and dismember the Abiy Government and Ethiopia. Dr Abiy is aware of the siege under which he finds himself, and is girding for a “two-front” war against the OLF and the TPLF forces.

Agreeing with Egypt that there should be no formal war over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on July 29, 2020, was a major relief, but the next stage would be to ensure that Egypt withdrew its support for the OLF insurrection. And this is where Egypt faces a fundamental question: Would a dismembered Ethiopia, with a radical and independent Oromia as a major sovereign entity, suit Cairo’s interest better than a stable and friendly Ethiopia?

Ethiopia has faced “ethnic cleans-

ing” type operations before, particularly in the *Dergue* years post-1974, when it deliberately reinforced the great drought of 1983-85 and later, killing 1.2-million in Eritrea, Tigré, and Wello, thus weakening secessionist movements there. These kind of numbers represented genocide then, and presage the kind of approach the OLF embraces in 2020. The great lessons of Stalin, Mao, and Mengistu Haile Mariam were not wasted on the OLF.

By August 2020, most Oromo radical leaders had been arrested, and this brought to a tenuous pause the mass surges of armed groups. But the international campaign to legitimize the movement of the “oppressed Oromo people” as the victims, rather than the perpetrators, of the civil war has just begun. Indeed, the savage crackdown by Ethiopian Government forces on Oromo extremists was deliberately engendered by barbaric war against Oromo Orthodox groups and against Amhara has provided ample graphic evidence for the diaspora to show the international media.

### Strategic Context

THE HORN OF AFRICA is critical to the security of the Red Sea/Suez sea lane of communication (SLOC), quite apart from the stability of East and Central Africa.

This situation is accentuated by the security and stability challenges on the Arabian Peninsula side of the Red Sea, and is subject to other regional power influences (from Turkey and Iran, as well as the United Arab Emirates and Qatar) and others.

The radical Oromo agenda as presently pursued is xenophobic and does not offer the prospect of stability, but rather — with the TPLF — offers a period of great instability which could jeopardize the viability of the Red Sea/Suez SLOC at a critical time in the global economy. It is a war which, since 1972, has already killed thousands.

The prospect is that the genocidal war will now be pursued with greater ferocity unless it is quickly curbed. Eritrea withdrew its support for the OLF in about 2018. Will Egypt now follow suit? ★

10 The Ethiopian Attorney-General, Adanech Abebe said on July 10, 2020, that the two men arrested for the assassination, and who admitted to the act, were from “a splinter wing” of the OLF, *Oneg Shene* (also known as *Shene Oneg*, or OLF-*Shene*), with the goal of inciting ethnic tension and overthrowing the Government. A third man was wanted in connection with the crime.