



Youth Democratic activist: the driving force of social revolution

“If one chooses democracy, one must choose to operationalize a radical system of rights and obligations- obligations which follow from the necessity to respect the equal rights of the entire society and to ensure that they enjoy a collective structure of political activity. Moreover, revolutionary praxis must stand opposed to the praxis of the dominant/oppressive elites, for they are by nature antithetical.” [The 60th youth]

*“A democratic leader’s role is not to tell citizens what to think but to enable them also think critically. His contribution is an analysis of how to be **with** citizens (not with foreign leaders for honeymoon luxuriously) so that they can develop this way of thinking. A critical perception of objective reality enables citizens to what needs to change, but it has two other very essential functions: this critical dialectical perception together with an engagement in creating their conditions of experience is what it means to be fully human, and it is the right of every citizen, not of some privileged few or ethnic group. Moreover, it is this critical perception of reality that creates the will or the motivation in citizens to risk themselves in social revolution for social change.” [Ademe Bilal]*

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Preamble

Highly relevant to the social science of youth cultures and subcultures is their role in vanguard movements of social change. In this decade, the Indignados in Spain, the numerous marches and encampments of the Occupy Wall Street protest wave, the Gezi Park demonstrations in Istanbul, the student protests in Chile, and the Black lives movement in the U.S., among many others, were impelled by the disproportional participation of youth. This is puzzling because many of the major movements comprising the foundational literature of the social movements field today have generational relations and the role of younger activists at their core: in the civil rights movement, the women’s movement, and the 1960s student movement in the U.S. and the 60th social revolution in Ethiopia.

Student and youth groups are often vanguard actors in turbulent times. This article proposes that when they are part of broader social movements, they can introduce strong age-cohort influences in a movement’s development. These influences derive from the balance between youths and adults in a movement and their interrelationships, especially over the long term when demands remain unanswered by the state. Other influences include resource availability, which tends to cluster with older generations, tactical specialization according to age cohorts, and the tendency of groups with younger members to be willing to take greater risks, be more passionate in their demands, and more militant in their tactics. Youth movements, while eruptive and episodic, have become an effective way for young people to mobilize over new issues that confront their age group and will continue to be a significant force for societal change.

Notwithstanding various vocabularies may be used to describe the 60th revolution, yet perhaps the most apt description is that it was a civil, social revolution. In other words, it was a social movement from the ground-up/the grass-root, yet was neither populist nor anarchic. It involved people from different social, educational and religious backgrounds and superseded political, ideological and intellectual distinctions. It was a mass

revolution because it successfully maintained its revolutionary nature until achieving its principal goal: transitional democratic government.

Proliferation

If we examine closely how the revolution unfolded, we will discover that events were not pre-orchestrated, nor were the steps that were trodden pre-planned. The politically active party-the EPRP-appealed to them by raising issues that struck a chord with peasants and all working classes daily lives, such as the injustices they suffer as a consequence of rampant oppression, marginalization, economic deprivation, poverty, violations of basic human rights, etc. They started with specific grievances against the heavy security shackles on society and the opposition to inheritance of the Military regime, and then the ceiling was raised to urge comprehensive political change which then grew into one major demand (principal mode of action):

1. Land to the tiller fair payments to the workers
2. Democracy for the overwhelming majorities, without restriction: freedom of association, equality, freedom of movement and press: it is based on the idea of freedom and democracy, in which all currents believe, and justice, a principle upon which no one disagrees.
3. All-inclusive provisional people's government: the respective younger generation engaged in at least temporary social and political activism in increasing numbers, criticizing the political situation or giving impulses for political, social, and economic changes.
4. Inherently motivated seeking a **deep-rooted democratization of Ethiopian society**: while they were propelled by unmistakable self-confidence and a sense of mission (**in the School of EPRP-ism**), that generation was distinctively organized with insightfulness and coherence.

The then social movements can be described as 'collective actions, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities. The components vital to the understanding and analysis of social movements at the time: the nature of the political opportunities arising from social and political changes in institutions of governance -the replacement of the dynasty by Military regime; the nature of the institutions and organizations developed by the social movement-the time evolution of the vanguard party (the EPRP); and the cultural and intellectual beliefs and conceptions that bind supporters of the principle of the protagonist party as the driving force of the social movement against the Military junta. The organized youth, guided by EPRP's principle, were more diffuse in power arrangements and horizontal in structure and they were more inclusive *vis-à-vis* revolutionary and dynamic youth. They were essentially the ones that played the key role in organizing the sequential uprisings without fear of persecution by armed junta. The youth wings of the EPRP, the democratic labor organization and women association also played a vital revolutionary role for social change.

In a bid to avoid security harassment or police brutality/murder, the social revolutionaries turned to clandestine model of tactical struggle directed by their vanguard party, the EPRP. The slogans and ideas that circulated in the straight cities from coast to coast stoked Ethiopians' sense of identity and deep connection by employing symbols or slogans that encapsulated collective problems, fostered unity, or encouraged struggle against the existing military regime. The revolutionaries used the theory of relative deprivation – which posits that there is greater potential for political violence coming from areas or spheres with a keen sense of relative deprivation, such as crowded, poor urban areas – to identify areas from which the revolution would set out.

Reification: Subjectivity as a commodity and the retrogression of social movement as a mythical market

The notion of reification is important for understanding society, politics and culture today. The logic of dehumanization works via the symbolic market and constitutes a qualitative leap in contemporary neoliberalism. The link between neoliberalism, the culture industry and neoliberal ideology promotes the deepening of the process of reification that occurs at any stage of the development of capitalist society. The concept of reification can help us to think critically about the relationship between social movements and the production of communication. It can help us overcome the liberal frameworks that dominate the analysis of the communicative process. Contemporary social movements often claim that their political goal is to increase the diversity of communication, to multiply voices and to be a mosaic of multiplicities and multiple partial interests. In such perspectives, the formation of consciousness is part of an essentially individual movement, where the collective is a mere sum of individuals and there is no collective project. The role of communication is reduced to the construction of multiple subjectivities that are as diverse as possible, so that individuals can position themselves in the world. Here we can find exactly the neoliberalist cadre's logic that should be overcome: communication and consciousness appear to construct a democratic 'competitive market' of opinions and worldviews. The view that the current-ethnofascist (the progeny of Woyane, Abiy) narrates and blows his trumpet to make reality.

Individuals establish specific social relations that under the conditions of alienation appear to them as having character of objective laws that cannot be questioned and changed. Social relations, then, are accepted as undoubted 'duty'. In the process of reification, the relations between the various partial systems, between each specific reality, appear to be produced by these partial systems, due to a principle that is internal to them. Thus, the final system, the totality, appears as a formality, not a set formed of material determinations and contradictions with its own dynamics. The concrete totality of the social process, which determines each of its parts, is in the consciousness of individuals replaced by a formal totality that seems to result from intersubjective interactions. In such a mosaic market of subjectivities, the ultimate parameter is the individual as consumer who chooses opinions like commodities in a supermarket shelf and not the collective subject. The concept of reification helps us to criticize this uncritical introjection of the logic of the commodity. Reification appears in the construction of neoliberalism as a generality that derives from a series of partial elements. The reification of social relations and their representations makes domination and exploitation as an objective law that is external to human production.

The abolishment of neoliberalism and neocolonialism logic requires the connection of the processes of formation of consciousness with the production of social significations that could overcome the isolation of individual perception through constitution of a collective political subject in a collective and historical political project. This task demands transcending the barriers of symbolic and subjective production by relating subjectivity to the material relations and contradictions of society. **The 60th youth propelled by EPRP principles made indispensable contributions to this political task.**

Youth students, irrespective of notional identities, must be recognizant democracy will be fully worth its name if citizens have the actual power to which as citizens; that is to say, if citizens are able to enjoy a bundle of rights which allow them to demand democratic participation and to treat it as an entitlement. What must be included in the democratic system?

- In the first instance, a constitution and bill of rights which enshrined the principle of social justice and specify equal rights with respect to the processes that determine state outcomes. This should involve not only equal rights to cast a vote, but also equal rights to enjoy the conditions for effective participation, enlightened understanding and the specification of the all-inclusive political agenda. Such overarching political rights will, in turn, entail a vast bundle of social rights linked to reproduction, youth unemployment, childcare, health and education, as well as economic rights to ensure adequate economic and financial resources for democratic social change
- In addition, a system of rights must specify certain obligations of citizens towards one another as well as responsibilities of the state to groups of citizens. The recognition of this priority is a vital component of the possibility of equal opportunities for youths (female and male) in work and in the broader framework of civic and political life.
- A deepened social/democratic consciousness of youth situation leads them to apprehend that situation as an historical reality susceptible of social transformation. If youths, as historical beings (just like the Martyrs model), necessarily engage with other youths in a movement of inquiry, do not control that movement, it will be (and is) a violation of their humanity. Any situation in which some youths/people prevent others from engaging in the process of inquiry is one of violence. The means used are not important; to alienate youths from their own-decision making is to change them into objects, as the now ethnically structured ethnofascist system, in Ethiopia, dehumanized the entire youths and led them massively unemployed.

What to be done to achieve the goal/mission of all-inclusive people's democratic transitional government? Methodology.

Most definitions of democracy now include the notion of respect for basic civil liberties: freedom of the press, freedom of speech, the right to habeas corpus, etc. This dimension is important because a regime can hold competitive elections with broad participation, yet in the absence of guarantees of civil liberties, it is not unequivocally democratic. State transition is the interval between one political regime and another: transitions are delimited, on the one side, by the launching of the process of dissolution of an authoritarian regime and, on the other, by the installation of some form of democracy, the return to some form of authoritarian rule, or the emergence of a revolutionary alternative. The EPRP is adherent to the trend of the provisional people's democratic government as the preferred *terminus ad quem*. The modern youth may follow the following premises:

- **popular mobilization and collective action:** to conduct revolutionary activities, the social revolutionaries must be organized with the aimed at destroying all vestiges of a society that are ethnically structured and adherent of neo-liberalists revolutionary activities consisted of undermining the half-backed ethnic's regime and bringing people to the cause through education: objective reality reaffirms that all of the past regime change happened through social revolutionary transition processes where a panoply of popular organizations struggled for the dissolution/dissipation of authoritarian governments and on behalf of establishing all-inclusive transitional democratic state. In organized social revolutions, the people see itself as a historically determined category, changing circumstances, which is not to be reduced to a pre-determined privileged classis nor to a collection of universally determined identities. And its internal structure as a hegemonic system includes articulation between part(y)ies and social movements and leaves no room for 'choosing' between one or another form of collective action.

• **centralization:** the centralization of the more secret functions in an organization of revolutionaries will not diminish, but rather increase the extent and the quality of the activity of a large number of other organizations intended for wide membership and which, therefore, can be as loose and public as possible, for example, trade unions, workers' circles for self-education and the reading of illegal literature, and the social democrats and also democratic circles for all other sections of the population.

• **citizen's social revolution:** exclusive focus on elite actors will not do for this reason; the efforts of popular sectors to redefine the political scene are also important. Labor unions, peasant groups, neighborhood and women associations, mosques, military institutions, and church groups must play prominent parts in the struggles that will end authoritarian rule. Without some initial cracks in the authoritarian coalitions, their impact is limited, but once such cracks appear, they bolster the efforts to oust autocratic governments: democratization involves a crucial component of mobilization and organization of large numbers of individuals. Social revolution for popular hegemony is impossible without organized and principled political party: exemplary people's democratic and revolutionary party hitherto existing in our country is the EPRP. Note that popular hegemony = Transitional people's democratic regime: not the path leading to the dictatorship of the mono-ethnic regime or any single party system but to be represented on the council of state/national assembly within the transitionally governing people's democratic state

• **commitment of political elites:** while commitment of political elites and parties to democracy is a necessary condition if democracy is to thrive in the medium term, it is not a sufficient condition for stable democracy. It is also essential that elites create institutions that represent interests in society and exercise moderating power over those interests. Societal polarization makes this process more difficult; moderation does not depend exclusively on the will and skill of political elites. Nevertheless, commitment to democracy helps make possible the creation of effective democratic institutions, and it also generates a legitimacy that can help new democracies withstand less-than-excellent policy performances.

• **democratic principles:** Ideology, values, and expectations affect how citizens evaluate public policy performance: mass organizations and revolutionary party have to put forward their own answers, thus enriching and giving concrete content to the revolutionary project and translating the idea of popular power into reality. Workers, peasants, and displaced people are demanding peace, equality for all, and country to inhabit, and this is taking place within an irreversible process of national consolidation in the context of an authentic social and political revolutionary transformation praxis. Support of youth and women participation in the transition to democracy through awareness-raising on economic, social and political rights with the aim of achieving equal citizenship which can be realized through the formation of the transitional people's government

• **being recognizant of popular hegemony:** the integration of the minorities and majorities under the direction of the social revolution for a common goal is a necessary precursor. The conjectural situation, through a dialectical relation between revolutionary party and mass organizations determines which identities will be developed, at what speed and in which direction. The central elements of this project are the mass organizations and their dialectical relations with the EPRP's guiding principle and with any sect of the country who believe in one Ethiopia and the establishment of the transitional people's democratic government. These relations have to be mediated and facilitated through revolutionaries and all citizens in the processes of their struggle

A message to all Ethiopian Youth (Be it Oromo Amhara, Tigre, Gurage, Gambelia, Harari, South or North-from coast to coast): *The power to change your country*

“All understanding is ultimately self-understanding. A person who understands, understands himself. Understanding begins when something addresses us. This requires the fundamental suspension of our own prejudice.”

[Gadamer, 1994]

1762 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, known as one of the most influential thinkers during the 18th-century European Enlightenment period, wrote “*Man/woman is born free and everywhere he is in chains*”.

Youth are being naturally endowed with dynamical prestige as the torchbearers or cream of the society and have a pivotal role to play both as social revolutionary for radical change and as the founder of new society: a society in which social justice, equity, freedom and fundamental basic human rights are cultivated. In our society bitterly divided ethnically and unemployment reached its climax, revolutionary youth is particularly important because it is the malleable clay with which the new man/woman, without any of the previous defects, can be formed. The framework that contributed to this radical societal change are the following:

1. The spontaneity and fierce struggle of young revolutionaries, their independence from political or religious leaderships, their strong willingness, and their capacity to break down the barrier of fear.
2. Your advocacy for general principles shared by the great majority of Ethiopians who do not hesitate to strongly support you. You demonstrate your ability to use the most modern means of communication between persons and civil organizations through social networks and coin it Ethio-media revolution.
3. Be recognizant the ethnic and cultural heterogeneity of the citizens has not to be stumbling block to efficiently revolt against any deviation from its unified objectives and any risk of ethnic clashes.
4. Realize that democracy can be advanced only through the struggles of the growing working-class majority, only through the self-organization of working people through mass movements for social and political reform, through strong, independent, democratic trade unions, through democratic mass working-class parties. Historically, it was not the normal functioning of the capitalist market, but rather the mass pressure and mass struggle of the working-class movement and its allies that paved the way, step-by-step, for the expansion of democratic rights, democratic reforms, and democratic political structures.
5. Against the triumph of authoritarianism and ethnofascism, violence, and death, you should passionately struggle for the democratic alternative that seeds social justice economic equality and employment. Why do you have to abandon your people and your own country to be slave abroad? The ethnic regimes, both the TPLF and the OLF-Abiy, have exploited you and your parents plundering the lion-share of your labor. Why hold Abiy Ahmed and his counterfeit “Prosperous Party” in high regard? That party inherently is an instrument of oppression and exploitation-just like his TPLF twin brother. Instead of inhabiting poverty-stricken ghetto and wallowing in the dust, why do not you use your renewable energy and proceed with youth social movement for social change? Freedom only for the supporters of the government and his opportunist elites, only for the members of one party (prosperous part)– however numerous they may be – is no freedom at all.
6. Be vigilant and understand that without general elections, without unrestricted freedom of press and assembly, without a free struggle of opinion, life dies out in every public institution, becomes a mere semblance of life, in which only the bureaucracy remains as the active element.

Public life gradually falls asleep, a few dozen party leaders-headed by the neocolonialist puppet-of inexhaustible energy and boundless experience direct and rule. Among them, in reality only a dozen outstanding heads do the leading and an elite of the working classes, parliamentary members, and working women are invited from time to time to meetings where they are to applaud the speeches of the ethnofascist leader, and to approve proposed resolutions unanimously – at bottom, then, a clique affair – a dictatorship, to be sure, not overarching democratic government, however, but only the ethnofascistic elites of a handful of politicians. It is obvious that such genuine democracy as, the youth must believe in cannot be bestowed on a people through charismatic leaders, through well-meaning revolutionary elites, through single-party dictatorships, through labor bureaucracies, through glitzy election campaigns financed by big-business interests, and certainly not through military invasions from powerful outsiders. It must be won through the accumulation of experience and struggles, also the proliferation of seasoned revolutionary youths, activists and democratic organizations, and the consequent rise of consciousness and revolutionary-democratic commitment among the masses of the people themselves, especially the immense majority of those who labor.



Prosperous OLF
party Social -
injustice party

Interethnic conflict:
internal
displacement, mass
murder, genocide
Civil war

Social injustice
Poverty
Dictatorial leadership
Primitivity

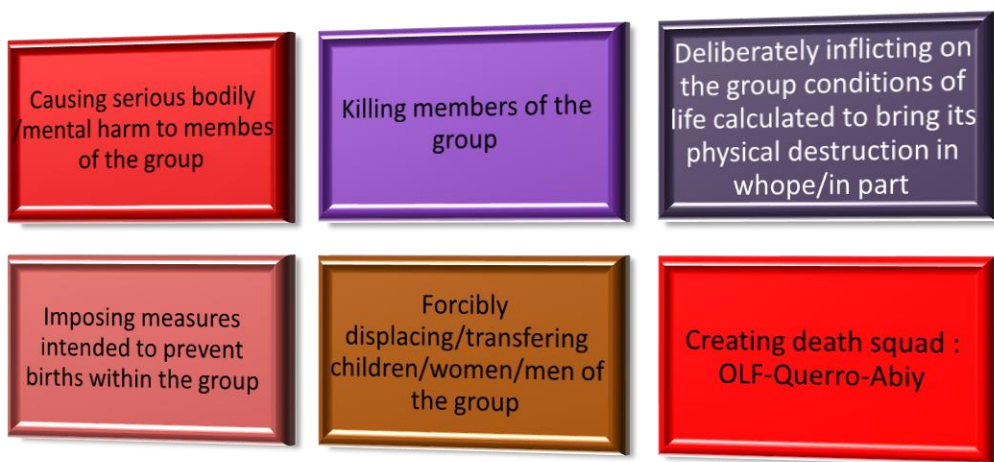
Religious intolerance: jihadists
like Abiy-Jawar emerges
Gross human right violation
No law and order: anarchism
leads to chaos

Centrifugal force =Abiy- Zenawi -Esaias -type force = Ethnic policies/ideologies: divide a nation. Caliph Abiy Ahamad the notorious renegade in betraying the independence of Ethiopia as country and the African nation from neocolonialism: infantile and imperialist stooge!

Finally, we have to learn from youth movement in 60th. It had been the model for the youth movement throughout the country. The direction it was taking was in fact the orientation for the youth movement of the entire country. Why? Because it was the correct orientation and transformative praxis. Revolutionary elites, in the matter of unity the youth of the 60th had acquitted themselves well, indeed very well and they achieved solidarity and unity. The young intellectuals and students, the young workers and peasants were all united. Large numbers of revolutionary youth from all over the country, and even from Ethiopian communities abroad, contributed to the social revolution in many aspects: financially, intellectually, and materially. Whether they were men or women, workers or peasants, they were all of one mind. Should this not be regarded as a model for the whole country?

Today’s intellectuals often tend to be subjective and individualistic, impractical in their thinking and irresolute in action until they have thrown themselves heart and soul into mass revolutionary struggles for emancipation of ethnofascism, or made up their minds to serve the interests of the masses and become one of them: ***the genocide conducted by Abiy-woayane daggers against children, pregnant women, Christians, Muslims, etc. is one of the most disturbing Ethiopian holocausts of modern time. He has the murderous genome in his DNA, just like his ancestor, “GADA system ,“and his surrogate father-Males Zenawi or uncle Esaias.***

The following genocidal activities are committed by Nazi-Abiy terrorist regime with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group. Inter alias:



All Ethiopian Elites must come together to bring justice to the victims of genocide. Ethnic politics must be eliminated/terminated and Abiy-OLF and TPLF bandits should face international court of justice for crime against humanity!

The independent nation of Ethiopia, in the last analysis, is yours: the young people, full of vigor and vitality that are in the bloom of life, like the light of photon emanated from stars with momentum and energy. In our time, the intellectual elite does not exercise any direct influence on the history of our nation; the very fact of its division into many factions (ethnic or otherwise) makes it impossible for its members to co-operate in the solution of today's dehumanization and mass murder by ethnofascist. In the theory of revolutionary transformative praxis as in every other branch of science, modern youth must think dialectically/critically, that is, you must not regard your knowledge as ready-made and unalterable/immutable, but must determine how *knowledge* emerges from *ignorance and transforms*, how incomplete, inexact knowledge becomes more complete and more exact.

