

Addis Ababa University

School of Graduate Studies

**Memories of the Victory of Adwa:
A Focus on Its commemoration. (1941-1999)**

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February 2004

**Memories of the Victory of Adwa:
A Focus on Its commemoration (1941-1999)**

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Addis Ababa University**

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Chapter One

Introduction

Historians of Europe and America have embarked upon hitherto little known historical themes. In this regard, historians of the two continents have also paid attention to the study of commemoration and collective memory. In France, the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States of America, the two subjects have captured the attention of scholars and a number of literatures are available in the libraries of these countries.¹

Notwithstanding this, the area I have undertaken, has not been researched by established historians as well as students of history in the historical discourse of this country. Nor there are general literatures that deal with the concepts of commemoration and memory. In the investigation I have made in the Kennedy Library and the British Council library, I found no germane material worth using for the research. As a result, I resorted to the internet, which I hoped, would have productions of researchers on these concepts. Unlike my expectation, I got only one article relevant to the discussion of the concept of memory and commemoration. These have posed great difficulty for me to make an extensive discussion.²

Memory is generally thought as an individual faculty. However, there are a number of thinkers, who argue that there is a “collective memory” or “social memory” or “public memory”.³

Every social group possesses the memory of its own past. It is usually the case that the group selects elements from its past to reconstruct a collective memory that makes up the foundation for its collective identity.

Hobsbawm, in this regard, remarks, “Society tends to eliminate from its memory everything which could separate individuals.”⁴

It is due to this essence of collective memory that with the decolonization of African countries, each country created its own collective memory by abandoning a European past to defend their new status and maintain a new position. Hobsbawm argues that with invented tradition continuity would be established with a suitable historic past.⁵

In his study of the relation between history and memory, Piera Nora underscores that collective memory is in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being dormant and periodically revived.⁶

As opposed to historical reconstruction, which is a systematic study of the past leading to the production of formal written histories, collective memory is informal and widely diffused. The production of more or less informally told narrative histories turns out to be a fundamental feature of all communal memory.⁷

Collective memory is likely to sustain itself in commemoration.⁸ Without reminders, memories will not be “activated”. Commemoration makes us recall by reminding us of something. It brings us back to the past and aspires to temporarily achieve a kind of communion with the past that is absent in our more normal interaction. In other words, if we commemorate a collective glorious past, we are for a while close to those who gave their lives

for the freedom of a given nation or, who were the victims of the inequities of the past.⁹

Commemoration is a formalized act and tends to be stylized, stereotyped and repetitive. Commemoration has two features: ritual formalism and performativity.¹⁰ It does not aim at historical depth and truth and it is content with its superficiality. It only emphasizes the place of the historical subject. We commemorate something because of what it means to us.¹¹

Most, if not all, of the societies of the world, therefore, set aside portions of time for celebrations. Modern states equally celebrate their commemorations. These national commemorations tend to be overgrown by feelings that have little or nothing to do with the occasion of a commemoration. Commemoration has been used by modern states to foster patriotism. It is indeed the most concrete expression of collective emotions and loyalties.¹²

Various themes with regard to the Victory of Adwa have been written, interpreted and reinterpreted in the historical discipline in our country. One major topic that has been overlooked by historians is that how the spirit of the Victory was maintained, revived, deformed, and manipulated through official commemoration and public memories and how its memories were represented in literature and the Arts.

The research at hand attempts to answer these questions. It tries to reconstruct the history of the memories of the Victory of Adwa with a focus on its official commemoration from 1941-1999. The thesis looks into how

Adwa' Day commemoration was officially celebrated and how its memories were represented in Literature and the Arts in our country from 1941-1999. The thesis does not include how the other parts of the world commemorated or remembered it.

The year 1941 is preferred as a starting period because it was in this year that the Victory of Adwa Day got legal ground and was declared as a National Day in the *Nagārīt Gāzetā*. The year 1999 is made the end period for my discussion mainly because in this year the celebration of the Victory of Adwa Day was the most colorful with respect to the earlier celebrations of the Adwa Day during the EPRDF regime.

In undertaking the research, I have used both primary and secondary sources. The thesis has employed periodicals especially newspapers published over the years i.e. 1925-1999. The discussion of this thesis would not have been possible without reference to the weekly newspapers: *Birhanina Salām* and *Aimro* for the early periods, the daily *Addis Zaman* and the *Ethiopian Herald* for the post-1945 period.

The newspapers, however, do not give us detailed accounts of the celebration. The scant and fragmented information coupled with the nature of the newspapers, which tend to give similar news reports, make it difficult for a historian to detect the change and continuity over the years. It is even worse for the early period and the reign of Lij Iyasu (1908-1916), when nothing is found. This was mainly because *Aimro* is not available fully. The two institutes, the Institute of Ethiopian Studies and the National Library whose collection is much useful, do not have the earlier issues of *Aimro*.

The publication date of the newspapers particularly from the early years up to 1951(E.C), when *Addis Zaman* became a daily newspaper, news reports of the commemoration of Adwa, would highly depend on whether the newspapers were published on a date close to Yakātit 23.

The discussion about historiography among the public is also made possible by the newspapers published during the post-1991 period. The newspapers cover wide range of ideas. They are forums to raise historical issues from above and below. I have drawn upon party newspapers (both government and oppositions) and other newspapers that give relative space to the issue.

One would expect much from oral sources. But it has been discovered during the research that oral information was less reliable for the early periods for which I lack written sources to substantiate the discussion. Members of the Ethiopian Patriots Association that one would assume to know dynamics of the event are almost less informed. Since they have always gone out to celebrate commemoration of Adwa, I assumed that they would inform us better than other sources would. But this has proven the contrary. They would obviously tell better about *Miāziā 27*, the Victory Day.

It has been a common understanding by historians that there is much difficulty to do research on contemporary issues. Especially, oral information for such issues tends to be less reliable and many informants would avoid answering to some questions or even worse could give concocted information. I have encountered similar problems in my research endeavors. My Oral informants refrained from responding some relevant questions,

which would have made the discussion more fascinating. Sometimes I had to explain the themes and objectives of the research to avoid suspicions from my informants. Moreover, my attempt to get access to interview important personalities whose response would have enabled me to get answers to some of my questions failed.

Despite such shortcomings, I tried to fill the gap through the cooperation of Television and Radio offices. From the former, I was able to watch public attendance from documentary films during the commemoration for the periods of the *Darg* (for the late 1980s) and the EPRDF period. Moreover, I had a chance to look into the Centenary and 103rd anniversary of the Victory of Adwa and the reports produced in relation to the Adwa Victory Day by the government which other sources do not provide me. I was also able to watch a film produced by Abāta Makuriā.

Regrettably, however, I have not been able to compare and contrast public attendance of the commemoration of the Victory of Adwa through out the three different periods by employing visual documents. The big propaganda that the *Darg* conducted using Adwa is not available and the beautiful parades and demonstrations of that period would have been better discussed by employing visual documents. In my discussion with the librarians, I was told that these works were recorded by outdated cassettes and hence they are out of use and the Ethiopian Television (ETV) is not able to retain all these documents due to lack of finance. No doubt, however, that there has also been purposeful destruction since the early times.

The radio has been useful in terms of providing information especially music. The Ethiopian Radio has an abundant collection of music. I have benefited from their collections. Moreover, I was allowed to research in the Voice of the Revolutionary People of Tigray and its Library. Here I got relevant information pertaining the Tigray People Liberation Front's (TPLF's) interpretation of the Victory of Adwa.

At this point, I cannot refrain from commenting that the ETV and the Ethiopian Radio should keep all documents of the nation for the sake of its citizens. I presume that there may have been other sources relevant to the discussion had it not been for the continuous cancellation.

The National and Hāgar Fiqir Theatres were also useful sources regarding historical plays and music. I have benefited from the sources I collected from them. In spite of this, however, lack of proper archive was a shortcoming. The frequent change of officials also deterred me from getting the necessary documents.

Lastly, I would have benefited more from other documents in the possession of individuals. I had to beg some people to give me access to their documents. But it was all in vain. The lack of proper documentation and the irresponsibility of some individuals to preserve documents have affected the production of historical works.

The thesis is divided into two parts. The first part discusses official commemorations. This part of the thesis has three chapters. The first chapter provides the background. The second deals with the commemoration of the Victory of Adwa Day during the reigns of Emperor Haileseelase and

the *Darg*. I have brought the two periods together because for the imperial time I lack sources and I have done this to balance my chapters. The fourth chapter is concerned with the post-*Darg* Commemoration.

The second part of the thesis discusses the memories of the Victory of Adwa in Literature and the Arts. In order to make the thesis readable, I have discussed Literature and the Arts in separate chapters.

I do not claim to have done an exhaustive and complete work. The fact that this topic is original, I hope, would add knowledge to the understanding of the Ethiopian society and would initiate other researchers to pursue more on this important theme.

Part one Chapter Two

General Back Ground

2.1. The Victory of Adwa

The second half of the 19th century witnessed the scramble for Africa among European powers. Britain and France pioneered the process of colonization. They were followed by the newly unified Germany and Italy. The latter, which was by far the weakest among the European powers, cast its eyes on Ethiopia.¹

The process of Italian colonialism commenced when an Italian private company, Rubattino Shipping Company purchased a piece of land in Assab in 1869. In the following years, they pushed towards the interior. With the support of the British, the Italians also took control of Massawa on February 4, 1885.²

Nevertheless, the Italian expansionist force met serious challenge from Yohannis IV. His general, *Ras Alulā* aborted these repeated encroachments at Dogali in 1887. Towards achieving their target, the Italians had already initiated a formal contact with Menelik of Shawa in

1876 and were supplying arms to him on condition that he remained neutral in the conflict between Yohannis and the Italians.³

In the anarchy which followed the death of Yohannis at Mettema in 1889, Italians swiftly occupied a stretch of the northern plateau where they established their colony of Eritrea with its capital at Asmara in 1890.⁴

In the meantime, extending their amicable relationship with the new Emperor, Menelik II, the Italians prepared a Treaty that could bind Ethiopia as a protectorate of Italy. It was drawn up by Count Antonelli and was signed by Menelik on May 2 1889, which is known as the Wuchale Treaty.⁵ The Treaty, however, brought the two countries to a confrontation. This was because of the Italian version of Article 17 of the Treaty, which stipulated that the Ethiopian government had to use Italy in its relationship with other governments regarding all matters.⁶

The terms of the Treaty, especially Article 17, became unacceptable to Menelik. He insisted that the article had to be amended. But the Italians incessantly repudiated this. The conflict over the Article came into the open when in December 1889 Menelik wrote several letters to European powers without using the Italian government as an intermediary.⁷

On the one hand, attempts were made by the Italians to persuade Emperor Menelik to accept the terms of the Treaty. On the other hand, the Italians employed their policy of subversion in the north and won the allegiance of *Ras Mangashā* of Tigray in 1891. Menelik's abrogation of the whole Treaty in 1893 brought an end to the diplomatic effort.⁸

Their subversion policy subsequently failed when *Ras Mangashā* joined the camp of Menelik in 1894. Both diplomacy and subversion had not worked for the Italians. They finally resorted to force of arms to achieve their aim.⁹ They began their invasion of Ethiopia in April 1895 occupying Adigrat and proceeding to the interior. After sometime, they reached Amba Alage, proclaimed Tigray their colony and established strong garrisons at Adwa, Adigrat and Makale.¹⁰

In the meantime, Menelik mustered a force of over a 100,000 troops from almost all parts of the country. With a less organized but determined army, the Ethiopians scored their first victory at Amba Alage on 7 December 1895, which was soon to be followed by the victory at Makale. This time it was not the ammunitions, which brought victory, but the wisdom of Taitu to besiege the camps thus cutting off the Italians from the water wells.¹¹

The final showdown took place at Adwa on 1 March, 1896 when the Italians launched a surprise attack against the Ethiopians. In spite of the superior armaments and military techniques, the Italians sustained heavy casualties and the Ethiopian army scored a resounding victory.¹²

The news of the Victory of Adwa was received with surprise in Europe. A decisive victory of blacks over whites had never happened in Africa. This gave the Victory of Adwa an immortal fame throughout the world. Especially in areas where blacks had been dominated, it became a beckon for freedom. It also fostered to the expansion of religious separatism in South Africa and the USA.¹³

The Victory of Adwa resulted in remarkable achievements for Ethiopia. The anguished Italians renounced their ambition and recognized Ethiopia's sovereignty at the Addis Ababa Treaty of 26 October 1896. On top of this, Ethiopia had achieved recognition of its sovereignty, which compelled other Europeans to start diplomatic relationship and to open up their embassies. ¹⁴ Furthermore, the Victory of Adwa has enabled Ethiopians to have a deep sense of national pride. ¹⁵

2.2. Commemorations of the Victory up to the Eve of the Italian Invasion.

The Victory of the Ethiopian troops at Adwa was followed by an extraordinary euphoria throughout the country. This incredible Victory could be said to have first been celebrated at Adwa. Pleased by the Victory the soldiers and the people continued to celebrate it all the way from Tigray to Addis Ababa. A large number of Menelk's army was fed by the people following the edict by Emperor Menelik ordering the people to supply his soldiers with food wherever they passed.¹⁶

As a sign of this astounding victory, all captured firearms preceded the Emperor and the Empress to Addis Ababa. With the arrival of the Emperor and the Empress, there was a colourful celebration in Addis Ababa. Cannons were fired and the clergy of the five Churches of Addis Ababa chanted before the Emperor. The residents of the town went out to the streets to welcome the Emperor, the Empress and the army. Gabrasillāse writes that the people were pleased because the empire and its rulers survived.¹⁷

In the subsequent years, Ethiopia enjoyed the fruits of the Victory of Adwa among which the basic one was its independence. It is, however, not clear, how this remarkable victory continued to be commemorated up until 1903, its seventh anniversary. The available primary and secondary sources do not enlighten this question. Some of these sources vaguely state that the Victory was commemorated on 23rd of Yakātit every year.¹⁸ It is apparent, however, that the Victory might have been celebrated in the subsequent years after 1896. Given the newness of the Victory in the minds of the rulers in particular and of the people in general, and that the Victory was achieved on Yakātit 23rd, which coincides with the commemoration of St. George, might have led to the celebrations of the Victory of Adwa.

As indicated above the Victory of Adwa had not been officially celebrated until 1903. Neither Gabrassilāse nor any other writer explains why the Victory of Adwa was officially commemorated at its seventh year. Oral informants, however, recount that the seventh year celebration complied with the tradition of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which requires the preparation of a grand feast in the memory of dead people every seventh year, *Tazkar*.¹⁹

A few days before the Seventh Anniversary of the Victory of Adwa, Emperor Menelik had issued a national call to all regional lords ordering them to come to Addis Ababa for the impressive commemoration of the Victory of Adwa and to give honors to St. George. His edict reads as follows:

“Praise and honor be to God. I plan to celebrate this event and that I ask you to come because God has kindly kept us in peace and health for seven years and we ought to give thanks. It is not to boast and show up my army and armaments.”²⁰

Emperor Menelik's order to the regional lords, "Neither to boast nor to show up the large size of my soldiers", does not appear to explain his intention. The fact that he called upon all the regional lords to partake in a military parade made his aim more of political than thanksgiving.

On 1 March 1903, a military parade was held in Addis Ababa in memory of those Ethiopians who had fallen fighting against the aggressor. This parade was a long exciting display at *Janhoy meda*. It was the armies of *Fitawrari Habtagiorgis* the then governor of Borena, Soddo and the adjacent areas that first passed in review. This was followed by the armies of *Ras Waldagiorgis*, governor of Kaffa and Enarya.²¹

The whole day, fourteen regional lords along with their soldiers passed their troops before the Emperor. Finally, Menelik's army demonstrated the efficient use of machine gun. During this magnificent commemoration 307,000 men at arms had taken part. European government consuls, regional lords and residents of Addis Ababa attended the Seventh Anniversary of the Victory.²²

Marcus says that the spectacular military parade signaled that the possibility of asserting regional autonomy was impossible.²³ It can also be said that the display of military procession might have aimed at warning neighboring colonial nations that the attempt at colonizing Ethiopia would result in disaster.

As part of the commemoration, Menelik threw a banquet in the premises of St. George Cathedral. For the commemoration, many cattle

(about 8000) were slaughtered for the people who took part in the celebration. It is said that 60,000 guests were entertained.²⁴ It was in St. George Cathedral that Emperor Menelik announced that the Victory of Adwa must be commemorated in celebration every year on Yakātīt 23rd.²⁵

We cannot tell with certainty based on written sources, why Emperor Menelik declared that the Victory of Adwa Day must be celebrated every year. It is apparent; however, that first the Victory of Adwa saved his empire from colonialism and disintegration and the Victory made neighbouring colonialists recognize Ethiopia's sovereignty. Second, he not only retained his throne but also he was able to strengthen his power throughout the country following the Victory. Third, it was believed that the Victory was achieved with the help of St. George hence he believed that the commemoration of the Victory would serve as a means of paying homage to the Saint's "assistance" for the Victory.

Prior to his campaign to Adwa Menelik is said to have pledged to build a church for St. George provided that the Emperor won the battle. The Victory of Adwa coincided with St. George's religious commemoration day, Yakātīt 23. Upon his triumphant return to Addis Ababa, the Emperor was determined to fulfill his vow by founding a church. ²⁶ In April 1897, a year after the Victory, he built a new church, circular in shape. In 1906, this church was pulled down and the sovereign laid the foundation of a new one in February 1907 which took 9 years to complete. ²⁷

The fame of St. George, following the Battle of Adwa developed into a myth that the Saint was the patron of Ethiopia. An English traveler, who

paid a visit to the Cathedral of St. George, observed, "...the crowd that watched us were very much impressed by my pointing out St. George and the dragon and (they) said that He is our patron saint".²⁸ The rulers had also special regards to the Saint. The Emperor not only built a commemorative church but the logo in the Ethiopian flag came to be the picture of St. George killing the dragon until Emperor Haileselesie replaced it by a lion.²⁹

It is not exactly known how the Victory of Adwa continued to be commemorated in the subsequent years. Neither chronicles produced during the regimes of Emperor Menelik and *Lij* Iyasu nor published secondary sources are helpful for the discussion. It is, however, most probable that the Victory was celebrated annually during the times of Emperor Menelik II and even during the short reign of Lij Iyasu due to the factors mentioned above.

This long period of darkness regarding the availability of literature for the subject of the study lasted up to the beginning of 1925 when a regular weekly newspaper, *Birhaninā Salām*, began to be published. Since this time, at least once a year, when the Victory of Adwa was celebrated news regarding the commemoration became common.

With the rise to power of Queen of Kings Zawditu, the religious symbolism of the Victory of Adwa sustained. Two factors seem to explain why this was the case. Primarily Zawditu was a devout woman. Secondly, it was the time when there was no external threat that required rekindling memories of the Victory of Adwa.³⁰

During her tenure, the commemoration continued to be held within the compound of St. George Cathedral where Zawditu was crowned on

February 11, 1917. In her period, on the eve of the commemoration the clergy of the Cathedral used to spend the whole night conducting their prayers in the memory of the heroes of Adwa and Emperor Menelik. The fact that Emperor Menelik, her father, was the hero of Adwa, made him central in the commemoration followed by *Ras Makonnin*, the father of the heir to the throne.³¹

Usually *Zawditu* along with the heir to the throne *Ras Tafari* (subsequently King) escorted by the imperial army from the palace would go to the Cathedral of St. George. Following *Zawditu* and the heir, the big lords would follow their master to take part in the ceremony. The *Abun* and the *Echege* would also preside over the thanksgiving.³² The participants would listen to the sermon and beautiful chanting of the clergy of the Cathedral. It was mostly the *Echege*, who would preach the sermon and perform the final prayer in the memory of heroes who had fallen at Adwa. His message used to focus on the fear of God; obedience to a ruler and defending the motherland. With this, the ark would get back to the Holy of Holies and the ceremony would end.³³

During the Victory Day, all shops and government offices would be closed. The Ethiopian flag hoisted throughout Addis Ababa would decorate the city and a 21-gun salute used to herald the occasion. Moreover, the Cathedral and its premises used to be filled by the army, who would come to accompany the Queen of Kings and the heir and by a large number of people gathered to see the occasion. Finally, in a similar fashion, the Queen of Kings and the heir would leave and go back to the imperial palace.³⁴

BirhaninaSalām reported in 1925(the 29th commemoration) that the commemoration was colorful in that pictures of Menelik and *Ras Makonnin* were viewed by the public and the event was captured by cameras.³⁵ *Aimro* for 30th commemoration disclosed that during the Adwa Day Zawditu threw a banquet for a large number of subjects in the palace.³⁶

What made different the commemorations of this time from the commemorations of the latter period was that no articles about the war were published. In 1928, *BirhaninaSalām* reported appreciating the new Ethio-Italo agreement that led to peace and friendship between the two countries and it declared that enmity was gone.³⁷

The Cathedral of St. George continued to be a place not only for hosting the commemorations of the Victory of Adwa but it was also here that King Tafari was crowned King of Kings Hailesselasiel on the 1 November, 1930 following the death of Zawditu.³⁸

Legitimacy to the throne was central in the political history of the country. Emperor Hailesellasiel had to achieve this by relating himself to Emperor Menelik, the maker of Modern Ethiopia, whose military leadership rescued the country from colonialism to attain legitimacy. It was towards this that on the eve of Emperor Hailesselasiel's coronation, the first official ceremony was the unveiling of the statue of Emperor Menelik II, which was erected in the centre of the public square near the Cathedral of St. George.³⁹ The construction of the statue of Emperor Menelik had begun during the reign of Zawditu. It was made in Germany by a man called Hartil.⁴⁰ An American diplomat, Jacoby said that Emperor Hailesellasiel determined that

the place which previously was related with terror had to be made one for national rejoicing in honor of Menelik.⁴¹

The new Emperor, the Empress, the *Abun*, governors and lords, envoys of foreign governments, the Duke of Gloucester Mr. Jacoby, the Prince of Udini, the Marshall of France, as well as the Belgian, German, Polish, Dutch, Japanese, Greek, Swedish, Egyptian and Turkish special Ambassadors attended the unveiling ceremony. The Emperor on the occasion said among other things:

“... Although Emperor Menelik II was Emperor of Ethiopia by virtue of his long and traditional royal lineage, all of you patriots and heroes are well aware of the fact that he was fortunate enough to have successfully pursued what Emperor Tewodros and Emperor Yohannis started in the struggle for the Unification of all provinces which were divided and balkanized as a result of the Battle of Grañ during the period of his father, Emperor Lebne Dengel”.⁴²

The *Abun* blessed the monument and the Emperor unveiled the bronze statue of Emperor Menelik. Mr. Jacoby noted that the statue was gilded showing the old warrior on a rampant horse decked out in gorgeous native trappings. The statue rose thirty feet high and was in memory of Emperor Menelik, the maker of modern Ethiopia. Gardens had been also laid out round the statue.⁴³

The speech of the Emperor mainly focused on the contribution of Emperor Menelik's achievement in enlarging and civilizing Ethiopia. The Emperor seems to have deliberately overlooked Ethiopia's Victory at Adwa under the leadership of Emperor Menelik. It appears that the Emperor wanted to avoid diplomatic crisis when the relation between the two nations

(Ethiopia and Italy) entered into a new phase following the 1928 agreement.⁴⁴

Although the statue of Menelik was erected, the commemorations of the Victory after Haileseilasie took power were held in the compound of St. George Cathedral. The commemoration used to be presided over by the Emperor, his consort and his family. The celebrations were similar as in the time of Zawditu.⁴⁵ In the celebrations, however, the liturgy composed in the church included the praise of the new Emperor.⁴⁶ Reports about the commemoration showed no difference except that in 1931, no news report was published in the newspapers regarding the commemoration because the Crown Prince, Asfawwasan's return from Europe dominated the news.⁴⁷

2.3 Memories of the Victory Rekindled.

The resounding Victory of Adwa and its memories were revived at the time when Italy began to challenge the sovereignty of the country following the Walwal Incident of 1934. The Italian threat and the subsequent developments in the eastern and northern parts of Ethiopia led to a large propaganda campaign. The earlier articles, following the Walwal Incident, were in fact not as explicit in terms of their anti-Italian sentiment as were the latter articles hoping that peace would be established between the two countries.⁴⁸

Optimism, nevertheless, gave way to pessimism when the Italians determined not to give up their war plans against Ethiopia. This was made clear in the speech of the Emperor in July 1935. In his speech to the Parliament, the Emperor disclosed that Italy deliberately changed a minor

incident into a major crisis. He blamed the Fascists for painting Ethiopia in the darkest colours. In the course of his speech, he drew comparisons between the Battle of Adwa and the upcoming war. The Emperor disclosed that Ethiopia would defend itself as it had done at Adwa. He remarked that war was inevitable and requested the strong need for the mobilization of the people irrespective of class, ethnicity and gender to defend the country as the forerunners had done.⁴⁹

Subsequently, various articles were put out in the newspapers. These articles largely emphasized on the values of liberation, patriotism and heroism. They reported that the independence handed down to this generation had to be defended. Although these articles dealt with the patriotism and heroism that the Ethiopian people were endowed with, it can be commented, however, that they implicitly referred to the Victory of Adwa.⁵⁰

As opposed to the earlier times when narrations of the Victory of Adwa were not published, articles were published recounting regarding the Victory of Adwa. The writers, to encourage the people, drew lessons from the Victory of Adwa. One article reads, “Italians are no different; their heart is similar; only their gun is new”.⁵¹

Concomitantly, having realized the inevitability of war, the more traditional of the intellectuals formed *Ya Itiopia Hizb Ya Hāgar Fiqir Mahbar* (Ethiopian People’s Patriotic Association). This association, spearheaded by Makonnin Hābtawald and Yoftāhe Niguse, aimed at making the Ethiopian people alert regarding the dangers of the war. Their prime objectives were to

make the people stand in defense of the motherland, to create national cohesion and patriotic feelings.⁵²

Their first productions were performed in the open air at Menelik II Square.⁵³ Although their speeches were not recorded, it is highly likely that the speakers may have drawn from the memory of Adwa. Yoftāhe is considered to have contributed many agitational pieces of poetry that aroused popular feelings. One of his poems goes as follows:

አጥንቱን ልልቀመው መቃብር ቆፍሬ
ጎብናን ከሸዋ አሉላን ከትግሬ
ስመኝ አድሪያለሁ ትላንትና ዛሬ
አሉላን ለጥይት ጎብናን ለጭሬ
ተሰበሰቡና ተማማሉ መሃላ
አሉላን ከትግሬ ጎብና ከጋላ
ጎብና ሴት ልጁን ሲያስተምር ፈረሰ
አሉላ ሴት ልጁን ጥይት ሲያስተኩስ

ትምህርት እንዲስፋፋ አገር እንዲጠና
አራቱ ጉባኤ ይሁኑልንና
መኮንን ደርሶ አሉላ ጎብና
አገራችን ትማር አሁን እንደገና ⁵⁴

In the above poem, Yoftāhe recalls the heroes of Adwa to inspire his generation to defeat the enemy. Although it is written in several works that Yoftāhe's part was large, I have found no other works of him on the theme under discussion.

Agañahu Ingidā and Walda Giorgis Walda Yohannis left behind their books. Although their productions generally deal with the values of freedom of motherland and patriotism, they in their poems alluded to the heroes of Adwa. In the following poem Agañahu seems to seek many Menelik's to rise and to inculcate Menelik's heroism in the people.

ምኒሊክ ዝም አልህ ወይ ተኩሎች ከበውኝ
ወዲያ አንዳይጮህብኝ
ይህ ጮሂ አይጨህብኝ ሰው አይታወክ
ያላንተ ዳኛማ የለው ዳኘው ማኒልክ
አድዋ ላይ ጣሊያኖች የዘፈኑ ለት
ምኒሊክ ጎራዴህ ወረደ ባንገት
በጣም ያስፈራል ባለጌ እንዳየኸው
ይህ ራስ መኮንን ውብ ገበሬ ነው ⁵⁵

The following poem paints Italy as a feeble foe, which lost the battle forty years ago. It also says that Ethiopia's gallant people would defeat the Italians again.

ተነሽ ኢትዮጵያ ጦርችሽን ሳይ
ተነሽ ኢትዮጵያ ጋሻሽን ወልውይ
ከፋ አርገሽ ታጠቁዉ ወንድነትሽን ይየው
ስምሽ የሴት ቢሆን መሰልሽው ወይ ሴት
ከምን ጊዜ ረሳው ሳይሆን አርባ አመት ⁵⁶

In the following poem, Agañahu mentions the heroes of the country: Tewodros, Yohannis, Alulā, Gabayahu, Tāfassa, Bashāh Aboye, Dāрге, Gobanā, Waldagiorgis, Abāta and Taitu and then says:

ታላላቅ ልጆቼ እንዳይስቁባችሁ
አብረው ነው ያሉ የሞቱ አይምሰላችሁ
ገና ሳስበው ልቤን ጨነቀው
እስኪ ስማቸውን በተራ ላንሳው⁵⁷

In the following poem, he draws attention to a number of heroes who paid with their lives for the survival of the country including Taitu whose role in history seems to have been eclipsed by her failure due to palace politics.

ምኒሊክ ጥራልኝ ቶሎ ጣይቱን
እኔን ለመደገፍ ትችል እንደሆን
ምነው ተኮሰኝ ጣይቱ ገላሽ
እንዴት ሞቆሽ ይሆን አድዋ ላይ ላየሽ⁵⁸

Waldagiorgis Waldayohannis produced two books of high importance in the whole process of arousing the Ethiopian people. Some 40,000 copies are said to have been distributed to the Ethiopian soldiers.⁵⁹ One of his books “*Jagnā Saw Tagādāy La Ṭalātu Almotim Bāy*” says that relentlessly fighting against the enemy would bring victory

እስኪ እናነሳሳው የጥንቱን ታሪክ
ተገፊ ተጋፍቶ አገሩን ቢያውክ
ትዕግስተኛው ንጉስ ዳኘው ምኒሊክ

ጠንክሮ ቢገጥመው ሳይንበረከክ
ተናቂው ናቂውን ይዞ እንዲማርክ
ግፋን በገፊው አዞረው አምላክ ⁶⁰

Apart from the open-air speeches, there were also *shilalā na Fukarā* (warrior songs and bragging) presented at Menelik II Square. It seems that there was an attempt, on the part of the government, to organize the singers during this time.⁶¹ Prominent among the artists whose songs were applauded by the people was Nigātwā Kalkāy, the first female singer.⁶²

It was under these circumstances that the last pre-Italian commemoration of the Victory of Adwa was celebrated. The imperial government had proclaimed since the outbreak of the war that all churches throughout the country had to be engaged in prayers and that arks would not be taken out from churches. According to *Birhaninā Salām*, because the memory of Adwa was used to arouse national sentiment during these times and St. George was considered as a patron Saint, the government allowed the ark of the Saint to be taken out as usual.⁶³ This time the number of people who attended the ceremony were not many since a large segment of the able-bodied men of the town had gone to the war fronts.⁶⁴

In the course of the war, the balance of power subsequently shifted to the Italian side in spite of the initial success of the Ethiopian army in the north. The Italians planned a two-month victory but had to fight to capture the capital for seven months. ⁶⁵ The defeat of the Ethiopians did not guarantee Italians an overall victory. They had to battle against the

Ethiopian patriots, who put up a strong resistance in many parts of the country. During the war of resistance, the symbol of Adwa was a spirit that encouraged the fighters to give their lives to the motherland.⁶⁶

2.4 The Occupation Period

The fall of Adwa to the Italians, in the early phase of the war, delighted the Italians and people in Rome were saying:

“Adwa had become a symbol of Italian failure which had thrown a shadow over the name of Italy at home and abroad. It was essential... that Italy should cancel this memory. It was essential that Abyssinia should cease to associate the name of Adwa with Italian defeat. Adwa was not a goal but a symbol.”⁶⁷

But Italian victory would not have been completed without the effective control of Addis Ababa, the capital city of their enemy, Emperor Menelik and where the symbol of Adwa was most conspicuous. No sooner had they entered Addis Ababa than they began to deconstruct Ethiopia’s emblems. Towards this end, they enacted new rules and proclamations.⁶⁸

First, they changed the names of many cafes and shops into Italian language. Roads were also renamed for instance Menelik II Square was renamed *piazza de Impero*. Second, the law also required every Ethiopian to stop and give salute to the Italian flag. Third, the Italians engaged on selective destruction of Ethiopia’s historical objects in general and of Emperor Menelik II in particular. These objects were regarded and stigmatized by them as enemies of Italy, “grotesque anti-Italianity”.⁶⁹

The Italians as part of deconstructing the country’s sovereignty began to demolish historical objects. Chief among these were an equestrian statute of Emperor Menelik II, St. George Cathedral, the Mausoleum of Emperor

Menelik II, a statue of the Lion of Judah and the palace and numerous treasures.⁷⁰

The dictator of Italy, Mussolini, was personally interested in removing from the capital all memories of Ethiopia's independence and gave his orders accordingly. Mussolini instructed an instant demolition of the statue of Emperor Menelik II. His order, however, met delayed response from Graziani, the Viceroy of Ethiopia, since Graziani believed that demolishing the statue would result in a strong resentment in the town. He sent a strong telegraph through Lessona, governor of Minister Colonies and dismissed Graziani's fear:

“... Orders that Menelik's statue and that of the Lion of Judah in the station square be demolished within 24 hours of the arrival of the present telegraph. Also the Mausoleum must be dealt with according to my previous telegram”.⁷¹

Following this, on October 17, 1936, the statue of Emperor Menelik II was fenced and guarded by armed men. For fear of popular resentment, the Italians announced that they wanted to reconstruct the statue. Their motive was, however, clear to the people who knew that the Italians would soon demolish the statue. On this same day, at night, the Italians knocked the statue to the ground, cut it into pieces, and buried it.⁷²

The demolition of the statue led to unpleasant feelings among the people of Addis Ababa. Dr. Ladislav Sava, a Hungarian resident of the town, remembers, “I was awakened at 7 o'clock by loud lamentations and complaints from the (my) Abyssinian servant. ‘Menelik is no more’. They have stolen our Menelik in the night.... ‘Menelik is no more’”. The Hungarian also

met people mourning. Italian soldiers dispersed Ethiopians whenever they saw Ethiopians together.⁷³

During the occupation period, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC) also went through hard times. The treasures of the church were not only looted but a few churches became victims of the Italian policy towards the EOC. The two most affected churches of Addis Ababa were the Bahata Church, where the Mausoleum of Emperor Menelik is found and St. George Cathedral, a church constructed for the commemoration of the Victory of Adwa.⁷⁴

As part of their vindication of their humiliating defeat at Adwa, the Italians removed the golden crown from the top of the Mausoleum and placed a simple tin cross from Bahata church. They pillaged a large number of the church treasures. They forbade people from visiting the Mausoleum and the church stopped to render regular services throughout the fascist rule.⁷⁵

The February 1937 attempt to assassinate Graziani, particularly, exposed Italian antipathy towards the EOC. They launched a large-scale massacre in Addis Ababa and the surrounding areas. Churches were prime targets of the Italians. One among these was the Cathedral of St. George. They tried to burn down the whole church. The interior walls of the church including its paintings and decorations were destroyed. Moreover, the storehouse of the church was destructed and plundered.⁷⁶

The replacement of Graziani by the Duke of Aosta in 1938, however, brought about change in their policy. One of the immediate tasks Italians

undertook was to reconcile with the EOC. They promised that no destruction of religious objects and persecution would continue. Towards this end, they sponsored the reconstruction of churches to ease the suspicion exacerbated by the massacre of 1937.⁷⁷

In the process of this reconstruction, they focused on particular churches, which were regarded as pivotal to their policy of reconciliation. One of their priorities was the Cathedral of St. George. The Italians repainted the walls of the Cathedral in black color against the tradition of the EOC.⁷⁸ This showed that the reconciliation was not genuine.

During the occupation period, although the ark of St. George was clandestinely taken out to Yifāt, the church continued its regular service with a minor ark.⁷⁹ But it is difficult to establish whether or not the name of Emperor Menelik II was mentioned during these times.

Chapter Three

Commemoration of the Victory of Adwa

3.1 Commemoration: Imperial times (1941-1974)

The immediate priorities of the imperial government, after the Italians were dismissed from the country, were bulldozing the memories of Italian occupation period and simultaneously reconstructing the nation's independence. Towards this goal, in the aftermath of the liberation, the newspapers played significant role by putting out relevant accounts regarding the second victory, May 5 1941, and resistance struggle waged against the Italians.¹ This was owing to the fact that the imperial government might have understood the value of employing collective memories to mobilize the people from the activities of the eve of the occupation. Moreover, it appears that the Emperor and his government might have become

cognizant of the value of commemorating a significant historic past while he was in exile.

The post-occupation commemorations of the Victory of Adwa were different in that unlike the pre-occupation period a law established the Victory of Adwa as a National day. The law stipulated that all public offices, government departments and banks in the country should observe the Victory of Adwa as a public holiday every year. This law marked the beginning of modern commemoration.²

In spite of this, however, the law itself did not make the Victory of Adwa Day a modern secular commemoration. The fact that the regime was feudal and deeply religious in which Orthodox Christianity was the State religion, explains why the commemoration remained more or less a thanksgiving ceremony, held always at the Cathedral of St. George.

In reconstructing the collective memory of the people, the Emperor took a number of measures. Towards this end, during the First Anniversary of the Ethiopian Victory Day on 5 May 1942, the imperial government re-erected the statue of Emperor Menelik that the Italians had pulled down and buried it in 1938.³

The statue, after having been rebuilt by Americans, was for the second time unveiled by the Emperor. The program of the celebration had been communicated to the people as a result of which the number of people who attended the unveiling ceremony was very large. Children who had lost their fathers in the resistance struggle against the Italians showed parade in the Square where the statue stands and they sang the national anthem of the

Emperor's time while moving around the statue. A large number of dignitaries, representatives of foreign governments and also took part in the ceremony. The Ethiopian flag was hoisted throughout the town. The statue was covered and the surrounding area was decorated with the Ethiopian flag.⁴

It is logical to inquire why the Emperor chose May 5 to be the renovation day of the statue of Menelik than Yakātit 23, the Victory Day of Adwa. It appears that the immediate years after liberation required extensive works of reawakening. The restoration of the statue could have played a great role in this regard. Second, it seems that the Emperor still had to place himself in the line of national continuity in the sense that the renewal of the statue would restore the prestige of his power and his country.

The most conspicuous legacies of the Italian occupation period were buildings and roads left behind which had not existed in the pre-occupation period.⁵ During this period, these roads and buildings were named after fascist Italian officials. The few roads of the pre-occupation period were also renamed after Italian officials. When liberation was achieved, these roads and squares were again renamed mostly after the royal family and a few of them were renamed after the heroes of Adwa. One of these was Menelik II Square, which the Italians had named it *Piazza de Impero*.⁶

The post-occupation commemoration of the Victory of Adwa showed essentially no difference from that of the pre-1935 period. The only exception being that narratives of the Victory of Adwa began to be published in the newspapers during the Adwa Day. The Adwa Day was no more the sole

National holiday after liberation. It became a subsidiary commemoration to May 5, Victory Day. Especially in the early years, Adwa Day commemorations was made to reflect the Victory Day of May 5. The newspapers came up with articles about the Victory of Adwa but they emphasized on the resistance struggle and the final defeat of the Italians by the able leadership of the Emperor and the strong resistance the patriots put up against the Italians. ⁷

Two reasons seem to explain why May 5 overshadowed the Victory of Adwa. First, this victory was achieved during the time of the Emperor Hailassilasie and it is understandable that any regime tends to give emphasis on its own memories and commemorations. Second, at Adwa a total victory was scored, whereas in the second invasion it took five years to gain victory. Glorifying Adwa no doubt could undermine the prestige of the Emperor who claimed to have brought freedom to the people of Ethiopia.⁸

The commemoration continued to be celebrated in the compound of St. George Cathedral up to 1974. On the eve of the Adwa Day, the newspaper, *Addis Zaman* would publish the programs of the commemoration. The brass bands of the army would present awakening music beginning 1951. Early in the mornings, a 21-gun salute would herald the events.⁹

On the commemoration day, the Emperor, his family and his officials used to go to the Cathedral of St. George escorted by the army, the *kiburzebegna* or the imperial bodyguard. Since the commemoration of Adwa coincides with the religious ceremony of St. George, a large number of the

city's population would go to attend the ceremony in their traditional vestments.¹⁰

In St. George Cathedral, the *Echege* or other higher religious men would preach sermons. Memorial prayers to Emperor Menelik and the heroes of Adwa would usually precede the sermon. Hymn and liturgy used to be delivered for the honor of St. George in the presence of the Emperor. The Emperor would get back then to his palace with a similar *modusoperandi*.¹¹

At times when the Emperor did not preside over the commemoration of Adwa Day due to some reasons: he paid official visits to foreign countries and had to receive guests, the crown prince, Asfawwosan presided over the commemoration. During the death of Empress Manan, his consort, the death of his son, Prince Makonnin in news reports of the commemoration were absent.¹²

More or less throughout the imperial regime the commemorations of the Victory of Adwa became cyclical. This may be related with the fact that the imperial period was a time of tranquility that did not require the commemoration of Adwa to be emphasized and its memories to be rekindled to mobilize the people.

Unlike the earlier commemorations, the 75th Anniversary of the Victory of Adwa in 1971 appears to be different in terms of the pageantry of the Adwa Day. For the first time wreath was laid by the mayor of Addis Ababa, Dr. Habtagiorgis Warknah on behalf of the residents of Addis Ababa. For the first time since liberation, the Emperor also threw banquets for regional

lords and representatives of foreign governments at the great palace in the memory of the Adwa Day.¹³

In connection with the commemoration, the imperial regime gave meanings to the Victory of Adwa. The editorial of *Addis Zaman* in particular, highlighted and reinterpreted the Victory to the demands of the imperial regime. It was repeatedly emphasized in the newspapers that the spirit of the Victory had to serve to enhance victory in various arenas. It was reported that the generation of the Battle of Adwa accomplished their tasks of maintaining the sovereignty of the state, it required the people that it should be their responsibility to bring about change and victory in social, political and military aspects.¹⁴

3.2 Revolution and Commemoration

The imperial regime was brought to an end by the *Darg* in 1974. On 20 December 1974 the *Darg* proclaimed Ethiopian Socialism as the political ideology of the country in which it defined its program: equality of all people, self-reliance, supremacy of labor, the preeminence of the common good and the inviolability of Ethiopian unity. These principles of the military government had their own ramifications not only in the interpretation of the country's past but also in the celebrations of the National Days such as the Adwa Victory Day.¹⁵

The leadership of the *Darg* showed ambivalence towards the country's impressive past. On the one hand, the two millennia history of the country or the periods prior to the 1974 Revolution was criticized as a time of

ignorance and exploitative feudalism further impaired by capitalist elements in the 20th century. On the other hand, the *Darg* incessantly looked back to this same past for sources of national pride and identity particularly to repel foreign enemies.¹⁶

Soon after the *Darg* toppled the imperial government, it undertook serious measures that undermined the old regime. Of the many measures it took, the *Darg* promulgated a law that made some changes regarding Public Holidays. The Emperor's birthday and Coronation Day were abolished and the Victory Day was changed from Miyāzyiā 27 to Magābit 28. Nevertheless, Adwa Day remained one of the three National Holidays including Maskaram 2 (the deposition of the Emperor), Magābit 28 (Victory Day) commemorated throughout the period of the *Darg*.¹⁷

Coupled with this, the *Darg* also made changes of names of the streets, squares, schools and hospitals of Addis Ababa by a proclamation issued on September 12, 1974. The pre-revolution Hailesselasie I Avenue that goes from piazza to Miyāzyiā 27 Square (during the *Darg* period it was called Magābit 28 Square) was renamed Adwa Avenue, in memory of the Victory of Ethiopia against Fascist Italy. The former Şahay Haileselesie Street was renamed Bālchā Abānafso Avenue, after the hero of Adwa.¹⁸ This was a clear attempt of the *Darg* to destroy the memories of the Imperial times and to rekindle the memories of the Victory of Adwa.

Likewise the *Darg*, though refused to recognize Emperor Hailesselase, continued to annually celebrate the Victory Day of Adwa and the Liberation Day with official ceremonies and articles in the press.¹⁹

The post-1974 commemorations were basically different from the earlier times with regard to the complete secular meaning attributed to the Victory. The deposition of the Emperor resulted in the dislocation of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC) with its preponderance coming to an end.²⁰ This had its repercussion in the commemoration of Adwa. In the earlier periods, the ceremony was totally held at the St. George Cathedral with memorial prayers made to Emperor Menelik and the heroes of Adwa. In fact, the church ceremony had been left to the Clergy of St. George Cathedral. Moreover, laying of wreath which had been made only once in the 75th anniversary of the Victory during the imperial time became a cardinal element in the commemorations of the Adwa Day throughout the *Darg* period.²¹

3.2.1 1975-1982

The Revolution gave a new momentum to the commemorations of the Victory of Adwa. The celebrations of the Adwa Day during the formative period of the *Darg* were warmly celebrated with parades and commemoration speeches. In these years, the *Darg* colorfully commemorated the Adwa Day as opposed to the commemorations of the imperial times as well as the celebrations of the Adwa Day following 1982.

Three factors could be said to have brought about this total departure from the pre-revolution commemorations. First, the early years of the Revolution had to get acceptance of the people at large. The government could achieve this, partly, by glorifying the Victory of Adwa Day for which the people at large had deep regard. Second, colorfully celebrating Adwa would

further discredit the old regime, which had not celebrated it in the same manner. Thirdly, since the immediate aftermath of the Revolution was a period of serious troubles to the government from both internal oppositions and external invasion, colorfully celebrating Adwa Day would enable the government to mobilize the people.

Since the demise of Emperor Haileselesie I, the Victory Days of Adwa were celebrated at Menelik II Square but in 1976,1978,and 1980 the celebrations of the Victory of Adwa were held at the Revolution Square (since the rise to power of *Darg*). During these times the chairpersons,(there were two chairmen, General Tafari Banti up to 1976 and Major (latter Colonel) Mengistu Hailamaryam in the following years) used to go to the Revolution Square, after laying wreath at the Statue of Menelik II.²²

The commemorations were attended by the chairmen of the *Darg*, His Holiness *Abuna Taklahaimānot* (in1978),the Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Cabinet Ministers, senior government officials, senior officers of the armed forces and the police, diplomats, delegates of international organizations and a large number of the people of Addis Ababa and its environs. In 1979 and 1980 comrades Nejuma, chairperson of South West Africa People Organization (SWAPO) and Romesh Chandra, Head of the World Peace Congress were guests of the celebrations of the Victory of Adwa Day.²³

Commemoration Parades

During these years, the commemorations were accompanied by parades by various sections of the society. The procession especially became

more exciting with the reenactments performed by cultural troupes of the various Theatres of the city. The socialist orientation of the state, which emphasized on parades during celebrations, might have contributed to the pageantry of these parades. Especially with the formation of mass organizations, the processions no doubt attracted large participation of the residents of the city and its environs.²⁴

The 1975 commemoration was held at Menilik II Square and was ushered in with a 21-gun salute at dawn. The mayor of Addis Ababa, Engineer Makonnin Mulāt laid a wreath at the Statue of Menelik II. Quiet a large number of people (about 600,000 according to *Addis Zaman*, although difficult to believe) from all walks of life took part in the commemoration.²⁵ This was probably the largest number of public attendance in the history of the commemoration of the Victory of Adwa. Since this one included street parade, it might have attracted many people to the commemoration. Above all, the achievements of the Revolution might have been so strong to induce many people to come out to the occasion.

The commemoration was especially warmed by theatrical and orchestra groups of the National, Hagar Fiqir, Addis Ababa Municipality Theatres and Military brass bands of the army. The city was partitioned into four parts and each part of the city with its music ensemble. These groups moved to the place where the commemoration was held at Menelik II Square.²⁶

The Northern part of the city accompanied by the artists of the National Theater went first. Patriots mounted on horses and mules, women

carrying provisions and loaded donkeys marched past. The ensemble of the National Theatre brought to life the time of Teodros and Menelik. Haimānot Alamu acting like Teodros, Dababa Eshatu acting like Emperor Menelik and Ababāyahu Mulāt acting as Empress Taitu escorted by the big dignitaries marched before the crowd. Others representing Italian prisoners of war, some others acting as dead people representing heroes, who lost their lives for their nation and some others demonstrating the Abyssinian boasting and bragging (*Fukarā nā Shilalā*) marched past. The spectators were reported to have shouted courageous *Abba Dāñaw* (the horse name of Emperor Menelik) have you come?²⁷ According to an informant, the commemoration was colorfully celebrated because the leadership of the *Darg* rendered horses of the Emperor and armaments from the National Museum to the Theatres of the city.²⁸

The parade of 1976 was by far the most organized held at the Revolution Square where a grand parade passed before the leadership of the *Darg*. The commemoration began when General Tafari Banti, Chairperson of the *Darg* accompanied by Major Mengistu Hailamaryam and Lt. Colonel Atnāfu Abāta, the two vice Chairpersons of the *Darg*, arrived at Menelik II Square. General Tafari laid wreath and moved down to the Revolution Square along with the two chairmen of the *Darg* where a mammoth crowd had gathered.²⁹

A massive parade and folkloric show by the National Theater, lasting for nearly two hours made this commemoration very colorful. Sitting on caparisoned horses, their chests covered with medals, decorated with prizes,

attired in patriotic vestments, exhibiting their spears and swords boasting and bragging members of the Ethiopian Patriotic Association marched past. They also shouted slogans that Ethiopia would not tolerate foreign threat against its territorial integrity and they called upon the people at large to support the Revolution.³⁰

The parade of the veterans was made together with the march of residents of Addis Ababa: young and old, women, workers, students and men organized by the Urban Dwellers Association marched in groups. The residents of the city were carrying placards supporting the Revolution and denouncing “anti-revolutionary forces”. Cultural troupes from the Hagar Fiqir and National Theatres dressed up in clothes of the various ethnic groups added color to the commemoration. Since this was the time when the 10th Africa soccer game was held in Addis Ababa, football players from African countries also attended the ceremony.³¹

In the 1977 commemoration, residents of Addis Ababa, delegations of the Ethiopian War Veterans, the All Ethiopian Trade Union, Peasants and Urban Dwellers Associations, the Ministry of Culture Sports and Youth affairs, students, army units lined up on the main avenues leading to the Revolution Square early in the morning waiting for the coming of the chairperson. Upon the arrival of Colonel Mengistu Hailemaryam, a delegate of the Ethiopian War Veterans Association gave a spear and a shield to the Chairman, as an emblem of handing over the responsibility of safeguarding the country from external encroachments and internal dissidents.³²

In 1978 and 1979, the celebrations of the Victory of Adwa took place at Menelik II Square. During these two years, it was the chanting and bragging of patriots as well as the march of a section of the Revolutionary army, which dyed the commemorations.³³

However, in 1980 there was a big parade at the Revolution Square where the commemoration was celebrated. Workers, peasants, youth, women, Urban Dwellers Associations, Revolution Defense Squads as well as units of the Revolutionary army took part in this public spectacle. The procession showed the artillery pieces captured from the vanquished Italian troops at the Battle of Adwa. The nationalities of Ethiopia were represented by a flamboyantly attired group who displayed the diversity and richness of the country's cultural heritage. Patriots carrying traditional swords and spears followed. Next to come was a long line of young people dressed in green, yellow and red. They sang revolutionary songs and displayed placards, which underlined the role of the young generation in protecting and building tomorrow's Ethiopia.³⁴

The All Ethiopian Trade Union and the All Ethiopian Peasants' Association, the Addis Ababa Women's Association, All Ethiopian Urban Dwellers Association and the Revolution Defense Squads took part in the procession. Last in the colorful march were the various units of the revolutionary army. Adding color to the parade was a youth artistic ensemble from *Bosa Kabale* of Jimma town who were applauded for the revolutionary songs they presented to the crowd. In 1981 and 1982, the celebrations of the

Adwa Day took place at Menelik II Square with the chanting and bragging of patriots warming the commemoration.³⁵

Commemoration Speeches

The commemorations of Adwa during the 1976-1982(with the exception of 1975) were made forums to deliver revolutionary messages in an attempt to rally the people to stand by the side of the government. These speeches were transmitted by live radio broadcast either from Menilik II or from the Revolution Squares. The speeches were made by the chairpersons throughout these years. With the formation of mass organizations, as of 1977, representatives of these organizations delivered speeches. The contents of the speeches had to do much with the Revolution than with the commemoration of the Victory of Adwa. The speeches largely varied in accordance with the prevailing political situation in the country. In fact, the speeches of the representatives of mass organizations were mostly mere reproductions of the chairmen's speeches. The speakers also employed in their speeches with slogans that began to be widely used during the period of the *Darg*. In this connection, all of the speakers drew lessons from the memories of the Victory of Adwa to address their messages. In doing so, the Victory of Adwa was reinterpreted and was given various meanings.³⁶

The parade of the 1976's commemoration was launched by the long speech of the chairperson of the *Darg*, *General Tafari Bantī*. He pointed out that at the time when the Ethiopian Revolution struggled against colonialism and imperialism, the Revolution would not succeed if it failed to retain the tradition of patriotism, iron will and valor of the heroes of Adwa. He added

that the Victory of Adwa would remain a living example of the determination of Ethiopians to guard their independence, unity and territorial integrity.³⁷

In the 1977 commemoration, representatives of the Ethiopia War Veterans Association, the All Ethiopian Trade Union Peasants Associations around Addis Ababa and Urban Dwellers Association made speeches in addition to the chairperson, Colonel Mengistu Hailamaryam. The Chairperson said that Ethiopians had repeatedly humiliated imperialism at Adwa and during the Second World War and this generation would renew the victory of the forefathers. He added, "... we bear with pride and full confidence the anti-imperialist shield of our heroic and gallant forefathers in unison with the progressive peoples of the entire world."³⁸

The representatives of the above-mentioned associations called upon the people to reinvigorate the nation's pride and patriotism inherited from the heroes of Adwa to do away with what they called the anti-unity and reactionary elements. The representative of patriots, in particular, pointed out that the Victory at Adwa was achieved through the realization that unity is strength and he urged the people at large that this truth had to be effectively employed now and for the future.³⁹

The 1978 commemoration was held at the time when the Revolution faced serious internal and external threats. The President of the Sudan, Nimeri had announced that he would extend assistance to what were then called by the government secessionist elements in Eritrea and to the Ethiopian Democratic Union. Somalia had already declared war against

Ethiopia. Furthermore, Arab countries were afraid of the revolutionary movement in Ethiopia and hence they sought to abort it.⁴⁰

In his speech delivered to the large rally at Menelik Square and to the Ethiopian people in a nationwide address, Colonel Mengistu said:

“... just as the broad masses of Ethiopia won the historic Victory of Adwa which heralded a ray of freedom for the whole of Africa, the time is fast approaching when this generation will be performing a startling show against the enemies of the country and its Revolution by re-enacting Adwa through the crushing blow...”⁴¹

Delegates of five mass organizations, including the Ethiopia Patriots Association, Urban Dwellers Association, All Ethiopian Trade Unions and Peasants from the vicinity of Addis Ababa, delivered commemoration speeches. As it was explained by the delegate of the Trade Unions, the government had to undertake more recruitment for the war efforts to repel enemies as had been done at Adwa.⁴²

When Ethiopians celebrated the 83rd Anniversary in 1979, Chairman Mengistu devoted his speech to the strong relationship between Adwa and its place in the history of liberation movements in Africa. During this time, comrade Nujuma, the leader of South West Africa People Organization (SWAPO), was the guest of honor of the commemoration. Chairman Mengistu noted that Adwa had ignited the light of independence to many African Countries. And the new Revolution, he emphasized, would not fail to extend its support to freedom fighters in their struggle against imperialism.⁴³

The major highlight of the 1980 commemoration was Chairman Mengistu’s address to the Ethiopian people. In his speech, Colonel Mengistu pinpointed,

“The Victory of Adwa ,which was a great witness to and historical proof of the fact that dictators and imperialists can not withstand the united mighty of the oppressed working class, should not be regarded as a triumph for Ethiopia heroes alone... is shared by all peace loving and militant people of the world because it demonstrated that oppressed working peoples with lofty goals and united will are capable of making expansionists and dictators taste the bitter choice of defeat.”⁴⁴

In 1981 and 1982 Chairman Mengistu and Fikrassilāsse Wagdaras, Secretary General of the *Darg*, delivered speeches respectively at Menelik II Square where the commemorations of Adwa were held. In 1981, Chairman Mengistu addressed to the public that the youth had the responsibility to keep the sovereignty of their country, which had been guarded by the blood of the heroes of Adwa.⁴⁵

In 1982 Fikrassilāsse Wagdaras, Secretary General of the *Darg*, addressed the Ethiopian People that the present generation of Ethiopians had to renew the heroism and the patriotism inherited from the heroes of Adwa with socialist patriotism. He said that the Ethiopian people as was shown in Adwa would prefer to die than to see the one and single motherland wounded and bleeding. He noted, “Ours is not a tradition of enslavement but a tradition of freedom.” In his speech, he warned external forces who were encroaching in the internal affairs of Ethiopia that the people of Ethiopia would pay any sacrifice to safeguard the country, as the forefathers had shown at Adwa.⁴⁶

3.2.2 1982- 1991

After the 1982 celebration of the Victory of Adwa, parades and speeches by the chairperson and by mass organizations were over. It seems that the *Darg* by this time did away with all its enemies and was at respite.

As a result, the colorful celebrations of the commemoration of the Adwa Day did not continue.⁴⁷

In the subsequent years, therefore, the commemoration remained similar in its celebrations. Unlike earlier times when the chairpersons presided over the celebrations of the Victory of Adwa, in the years following 1981 the commemorations were presided over by other senior officials of the government in fact the President used to attend the commemoration irregularly. According to *Ato Zawde Taklu*, the chairperson was supposed to attend regularly the Victory Day, Magābit 28.⁴⁸

During these years (1983- 1991) on the eve of the Victory Day of Adwa, music of the brass bands of the armed and police forces playing military and other tunes were marching around the major Squares of the capital. On the Adwa Day, the celebrations would be set in motion by 21-gun salute at dawn and would be followed by laying of wreath by a higher government official at Menelik Square. The chanting and bragging of Patriots would go after the laying of wreath and the ceremony would end .⁴⁹ According to an oral informant, since the Victory of Adwa Day was known, members of the Ethiopian Patriots Association would go to the celebrations without the request of the government .⁵⁰

Notwithstanding these, in the years 1982-1991 the Victory of Adwa was given various meanings. The reinterpretations of the victory of Adwa went along with the urgent priorities of the government. This was a clear statement whereby useable past as in Adwa could be used to justify policies promulgated by the *Darg*.

In the first half of the 1980's, the *Darg* eliminated all its enemies and as a result, it tried to embark upon a campaign to build the economy.⁵¹ In this connection, it was said in 1983 that Ethiopians had inherited bravery, which was their distinct character. This would be used to work for development, security and prosperity. This was repeated at the time when the country suffered from serious famine and drought in 1984. It was recognized that political freedom gained through Adwa without proper economic development would not guarantee absolute freedom. As a result, it was reported and emphasized in the newspapers that the Victory of Adwa had to be replicated in the economic arena.⁵²

In the subsequent years, the *Darg*'s device to solve the multi-faceted national problems was an emergency and campaign approach, a legacy of its military orientation.⁵³ Towards this end, the Victory of Adwa was also reinterpreted to help achieve these campaigns. When the *Darg* proclaimed national service, (which required every able bodied man to undergo military training in order to be called any time when the country would encounter internal and external dangers), it was explicitly disclosed that defending the motherland was not left to some sections of the society only . As in the time of Adwa, it had to be the responsibility of every citizen to pay the necessary sacrifice to keep the unity of the country.⁵⁴

As of the second half of the 1980's, political instability exacerbated and the hegemony of the *Darg* began to decline. These times, mobilization of people to the various fronts was essential. It was hence emphasized in the newspapers that the youth had to safeguard the independent country it had inherited from its precursors. The editorial of *Addis Zaman*, in particular, said that during the Battle of Adwa it was the youth, who had fought and

won the Victory. The newspaper required that the youth of this generation would be expected to die for the motherland. It was also underscored that the unity of the people would do anything as shown by what the ill-organized but united Ethiopians had done in 1896.⁵⁵

When the situation in the country worsened, in the last two years of the 1980's and in 1990 and 1991, due to the wars with the Tigray People Liberation Front and Eritrean People Liberation Front, it was remarked that the rebels failed to recognize the heroism and patriotism that the people of Ethiopia would show for their unity.⁵⁶

Chapter Four

Post *Darg* Commemoration

4.1 TPLF's Interpretation of Ethiopian History

In a history book written by the Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) in 1984 with the title: "*Tārīkin Gamgāmin Wayāna Itiopia*" (History and Criticism of Revolutionary Ethiopia), it is written that it was only among the historians of the *Darg* that Ethiopia was regarded to have a history of 3000

years. The book points out that Teodros and Yohannis controlled and administered mainly central and northern parts of the present Ethiopia. The book argues that it was Menelik who initiated and finalized the formation of the present day Ethiopia.¹

According to the TPLF, the enlargement of Ethiopia was made possible by the aggressive war Menelik launched against various ethnic groups of Ethiopia. In the course of the expansion, Emperor Menelik committed major atrocities against various peoples in the south, southwest and east parts of Ethiopia. Likewise, in Tigray after having reinvigorated his military and economic power, Emperor Menelik enacted a policy to impoverish Tigray, which compelled Tigreans to bear ill-treatment and maladministration imposed upon them by the Shewan Amhara. These ill-treatment and maladministration continued and got worse throughout the 20th century.²

With regard to the place of Tigreans in combating foreign enemies, TPLF pointed out that though the role of Tigreans was always great chroniclers and historians continued to downplay this fact. Ato Meles Zenawi, the current Prime Minister of Ethiopia, when he was a student at AAU, argued that the Victory of Adwa was achieved due to the huge sacrifices paid by the people of Tigray.³ The TPLF also believed that Emperor Menelik following the Battle of Adwa, sold Eritrea to the Italians and it argued that the Eritrean question was a legitimate struggle for independence.⁴

With these perspectives regarding the country's past, TPLF/ EPRDF pulled down the *Darg* and took over power in May 1991. In the subsequent

years, therefore, the ruling regime reflected its stand on many issues regarding the country's past which in one way or the other had its effect in the celebrations of Adwa Day as well as in the memories of the Victory of Adwa.

With the coming of the EPRDF/TPLF to political power, the long held interpretation of the country's past met challenges. Almost all ethnic political organizations claimed that their dignity and rights had been transgressed by the invasion of Menelik. The animosity towards the Emperor reached its highest state, one can say, during this period.⁵

There was also a debate on the longevity of the Ethiopian state. Although this debate goes back to the pre-1991 period, at this time, it reached a crescendo. Two views appear to dominate the discussion. The first view was the dominant in the sense that it was the accepted interpretation by the state up until EPRDF came to power. This view argues that independent Ethiopia has existed for three millennia. This party may be grouped as scholars and adherents of Greater Ethiopia. The other group argues that Ethiopia in its present shape has a little over hundred year's history. This party regards Ethiopia as a black African colonialist country and questions the legitimacy of the Ethiopian state. This group may be classified as ethnonationalist scholars. These views nearly dominated the controversies in the press. ⁶ In fact, EPRDF was the major champion of the latter view, although it had to repudiate it as time went by.

4.2 OPDO-Led Demonstration and Counter Demonstration

The ambivalence of the government on the country's past was employed by one of the offshoots of EPRDF, the Oromo People Democratic Organization (OPDO) to stage a demonstration demanding the demolition of the statue of Emperor Menelik II. According to Dr. Nagasso Gidada (former President of Ethiopia), OPDO believes that Menelik was a colonialist and his statue would remind us of the heinousness of the acts the Emperor committed against the Oromos and the peoples of southern Ethiopia. He recounts that the demonstration was primarily organized by OPDO leadership to make their stand clear without the prior knowledge of the EPRDF.⁷

The demonstration was organized by OPDO following the four Oromo Political organizations, Oromo People Democratic Organization (OPDO), Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia (IFLO) and Oromo Abo Liberation Front (OALF) announced their Union.⁸

An estimated 50,000 people are reported to have taken part on December 5, 1991. The demonstrators gathered at Masqal Square (Since the downfall of the *Darg*) and moved around the major streets in the city where they once rounded up at Menelik II Square. Upon their arrival at Menelik Square, the demonstrators said that Emperor Menelik had committed atrocities against the Oromos and had dispossessed their land. They then veiled the statue of Menelik with black garment and solicited for its immediate demolition.⁹

Apart from this, the demonstration had another objective, according to Dr. Nagasso. Since there was rumor that OPDO did not represent the

interest of the Oromos, OPDO wanted to take the initiative to try to demolish the statue of Menelik, which the Oromos regard as colonialist. The demonstration, therefore, intended to get public support and to discredit OLF.¹⁰

This demonstration, nevertheless, led to immediate opposition. The Ancient Ethiopian Patriotic Association was the first to oppose this claim and wrote a petition to the President and the Prime Minister of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia opposing the demand of OPDO.¹¹ A few days after the OPDO demonstration, Emperor Menelik II Memorial Organization went one-step further organized a huge counter demonstration against the OPDO led demonstration. According to an informant, the leaders of this institution felt obliged to protect the statue, as Queen of Kings Zawditu, the daughter of Emperor Menelik, founded the institution.¹²

It was on 17 December 1991, that a population estimated over half a million, according to *Addis Zaman*, the largest number of demonstrators ever to take part in the history of the country, staged in counter demonstration against the OPDO organized demonstration. Largely, young people including people from all lifestyles and from several ethnic groups attended it. The demonstrators set out from Masqal Square carrying placards, the Ethiopian flag, and pictures of Emperor Menelik II and Empress Taitu to the office of the House of Representatives where they submitted their formal request. They petitioned that the maker of modern Ethiopia, Emperor Menelik's statue, must not be demolished.¹³

They presented their appeal to the office of the Prime Minister where Ato Marasā Alamāyahu, Head of the Social Affairs of the Prime Minister's

Office received them. He responded to the representatives of the demonstrators that the government did not get an application from any group to demolish the statue. He noted that the most important thing was that the question did not represent the interest of the Oromo people at large and he assured the demonstrators that the statue would not be destroyed.¹⁴

The demonstrators culminated their rally at Menelik II Square where choirs of the different Churches of Addis Ababa presented songs in the memory of Emperor Menelik II and chanting and bragging by patriots were displayed. The black garment put on the statue was taken away. Laying of wreath was made by organizations including some churches and Lij Mesfin Iyasu, the grand son of Lij Iyasu, donated Birr 2000 for the renovation of the statue.¹⁵

Among the many placards carried by the demonstrators were “Hands off from the memory of Emperor Menelik.” “If there is no unity Ethiopia will be disintegrated.” “This is a move to divide Ethiopia” and “The idea of demolishing the statue is engendered by our enemies to deconstruct Ethiopia”.¹⁶

According to Dr. Nagasso, OPDO did not insist on its request regarding the statue of Emperor Menelik II. He recounts that OPDO reconsidered its stand realizing that the statue had to be left as a historical artifact. On the part of EPRDF, the request of OPDO was not seriously taken. EPRDF also wanted to ease the problem; as a result, it did not support the first demonstration according to the information obtained from Dr. Nagasso.¹⁷

It is recognized from the two demonstrations that the struggle over the past of the country was very strong this time. Apart from the debates in the press, it burst out and became politically sensitive.

4.3 Transitional Government and the Adwa Day

Dr. Nagasso recounts that EPRDF did not emphasize on commemoration days. However, it was always willing to uphold the existing traditions. Since it follows Revolutionary Democracy, EPRDF considers the Victory of Adwa as anti-imperialist victory and it regards Adwa a Victory that epitomizes the unity of all Ethiopia. He adds that EPRDF paid attention to meetings during public days and the grand activities, as was the custom during the *Darg* period, could not be pursued.¹⁸

It was two months after the two demonstrations (Yakātit 23, 1984 E.C) that the first post-*Darg* commemoration was held at Menelik II Square. The celebration took place in the presence of the provisional administrator of Addis Ababa, *Ato Muluālam Ababa* who put a wreath under the statue of Menelik II. In his speech to the people gathered at Menelik II Square, he asserted that the Victory of Adwa was not achieved by an individual [Emperor Menelik] or a few other military leaders but it was a Victory gained by the various nations and nationalities of the peoples of Ethiopia..¹⁹

During this commemoration, *Addis Zaman* reported that the Ethiopian flag was not raised in and around the Menelik Square except the one hoisted by the patriots. Moreover, the tradition of the 21-gun salute at dawn was this time made only 12 times.²⁰

According to a participant of the celebration, the reason why only a few flags were raised at this time was associated with the press speech of then Ethiopian President, *Ato Meles Zenawi* upon his arrival at Addis Ababa after EPRDF forces had controlled the city. The President had commented that the Ethiopian flag was employed by the *Darg* to kill the precious sons and daughters of the country and that it was a piece of cloth. His remark might have threatened the demonstrators to come out boldly with their flags at this time.²¹ The OPDO-led demonstration as well might have had its own impact regarding the celebration of Adwa Day.

Dr. Nagasso states that since this was the time when a large number of political organizations put forward their ambivalence and even opposition towards the Ethiopia flag, this might have had its repercussion on the celebration of Adwa Day. Regarding the 21-gun salute, he says that in the early stages when EPRDF took power it was not cognizant of a number of issues. It is likely that ignorance was responsible for reducing the gun salute since the next time the tradition was revived.²²

The commemoration of Adwa continued to be celebrated on a similar fashion up to the Centenary of Adwa in 1996. In the years 1992-1995, on the eve of the Adwa Day music by brass bands of the army, on the Adwa Day laying of wreath by the Vice President of the country, Dr. Faqādu Gadāmu, 21-gun salute at dawn, and the parade of the patriots around the statue of Menelik that marked the commemoration of the Adwa Victory Day.²³

In line with this, the government also gave meaning as in the earlier times to the Victory of Adwa. The fact that civil wars subsided during these

years, the government reinterpreted the Victory of Adwa to speed up economic development and democracy. It was stated that the unity of people shown at Adwa, had to be replicated to bring about rapid economic growth to the country.²⁴ With regard to this, the President of the Transitional Government, *Ato Meles Zenawi*, in his speech addressed to the Ethiopian people on the eve of the Adwa Victory Day in 1993, underscored that the Ethiopian people had no conflict over resources as had been exhibited in Adwa, all Ethiopian people would rather demand to come out from slavery and oppression.²⁵

4.4 The Centenary Celebrations and Controversies

4.4.1 Establishment of Committess

The Centenary of Adwa was celebrated in 1996. This grand ceremony was a controversial event. The process of the celebrations was so highly politicized that it did not acquire the pageantry it should have gained.

Independently of each other, three committees had been established to organize the Centenary. The first of these committees was the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES) committee that was established on 22 November 1994. The IES believed that since the Centenary was a big national day, it set out to celebrate it. To this end, it organized a committee in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Sports. The IES Committee was committed to undertake three major tasks: organizing an international conference on various themes about the victory, preparing an exhibition that would display

the victory and producing a film based on solid documentary evidence on the event.²⁶

The second committee was the National Committee established under the auspices of the office of the Prime Minister on 20 June 1995. This committee was led by Professor Andreas Eshete. It was officially inaugurated on a meeting held at Economic Commission for Africa in the presence of the then Ethiopia Prime Minister, Tamrat Layne, Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, the then Secretary General of the OAU and Mr. Alfred Nzo Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of South Africa and others.²⁷

According to Professor Andreas Eshete, the government vested the responsibility to a neutral body to allow wider public participation and to avoid accusations from the oppositions.²⁸

In its first meeting, the National Committee announced the spirit of how it would organize the Centenary of Adwa. Accordingly, it disclosed that Adwa's Centenary celebrations would not bolster partisan politics or ideology. Professor Andreas underscores that the National Committee was not willing to celebrate the Centenary as was in the former days when individual military leaders were canonized. In a statement issued by the National Committee, it was stated:

“... the story we now tell ourselves of Adwa can be an exercise in mutual reconciliation and collective self definition that can play a formative role in the on going construction of our national identity. We should therefore take advantage of the happy coincidence that the centennial occurs at a time when conditions for forging popular unity among Ethiopian citizens and communities are more favorable than ever.”²⁹

In addition to these objectives, the National Committee announced that it would give the Adwa victory an African context. Professor Andreas recounts that the National Committee recognized that the celebration of the Centenary would be a good forum to cement the fraternity of the people of Ethiopia with the rest of Africa hence the Committee put emphasis on the Victory of Adwa as an African victory.³⁰ The National Committee therefore made itself responsible to organize the centenary at the national level, to coordinate and help other committees, bridge between the government and the other Committees.³¹

The third Committee was the Tigray Centennial Committee. The then president of Tigray Regional Administration *Ato* Gabru Asrāt, on May 8, 1995 officially charged the Tigray Bureau of Culture and Sports and the Tigray Development Association (TDA) to run the activities in Tigray for the Centenary celebrations. This Committee set out to facilitate the activities of the national and the IES committees. To this goal, it constituted other subcommittees to help the celebrations successful. In Adwa, a special committee was also formed to facilitate the activities where the Centenary would be celebrated.³²

4.4.2. A.A.O.P's Demonstration

The preparations and organizations of the centenary celebrations, however, created ambivalence and suspicion among various parties. No sooner had the National Committee made its first meeting than the private press began to accuse the National Committee. The private press reported that Professor Andreas, the chairperson of the National Committee, passed

deliberately without mentioning the name and the role of Emperor Menelik at the Battle of Adwa during the first session of the establishment of the National Committee. *Tobīa* disclosed that the National Committee aspired to overplay the role of Tigreans for the Victory of Adwa decided to celebrate the Centenary at Adwa. It commented that the government entrusted this responsibility to the National Committee to manipulate this Committee and to monitor its activities. *Tobīa* reported that the National Committee was not a neutral body. ³³

Subsequently, the controversy over whether the Centenary had to be celebrated in Addis Ababa or Adwa sharpened and nearly dominated the reports of some of the newspapers. The All Amhara People Organization (AAPO) whose organ, *Andnat*, was the most outspoken among the oppositions explicitly condemned the activities of the National Committee.³⁴ According to an informant, the AAPO made itself responsible to challenge the decision of the government since the government had to be stopped when doing anti unity activities .³⁵

Consequently, AAPO wrote a letter to President Nagasso Gidada and Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in December 1995. The letter said that the Victory of Adwa belonged to the whole people of Ethiopia and its commemorations had been held in Addis Ababa for 99 years and that it would not accept the idea that the Centenary would be celebrated at Adwa, and that the memorial monument would be built at Adwa. It also criticized the deliberate move to demean the role of Emperor Menelik. In connection with these, the letter emphasized “if this [the commemoration of the

Centenary at Adwa] is implemented, it is a success to those colonizers who had failed to divide us and will shade our identity.” It solicited the government to commemorate the Centenary as usual in the metropolis.³⁶

Following the appeal of AAPO, it was repeatedly reported in the non-government press, regarding how the Centenary had to be celebrated. When the request of AAPO got no response from the government, it scheduled a demonstration to persuade the government to reconsider its demands on 17 February 1996.³⁷

The demands of AAPO were, first, the Centenary had to be celebrated in Addis Ababa. Second, the falsification on the Victory of Adwa had to stop. Third, the transportation of historical artifacts from the capital to Adwa under the guise of exhibition had to immediately cease.³⁸

AAPO invited various civic and political organizations to take part in the demonstration: Ethiopian Alternative Forces Council, Ethiopian Teachers Association, Ethiopian Human Rights Council, Ethiopian Muslims Affairs Council, Evangelist Churches, Ancient Ethiopia Patriotic Association, Region 14 Administration, Police Commission and representatives of all Embassies and renowned individuals.³⁹

In the meantime, other organizations were reported to have agreed to take part in the demonstration, *Tomār* disclosed. These were “*Ya Itiopiawinat Dirjit*” and “The Ethiopian Teachers Association”. Especially the former organization denounced the National Committee in that the Committee worked in alliance with the Italian government, which the organization saw it with great suspicion.⁴⁰

AAPO used the available media to call upon the people to participate in the demonstration. Towards this end, it produced and dispatched over a 100,000 pamphlets and posters. Its Music band, *Morash* went around the city inviting people to take part in the demonstration. T-shirts were made in the names of Emperor Menelik II and Empress Taitu.⁴¹

According to *Andnat* and *Tobīa* an unknown organized group distributed leaflets against the spirit of the demonstration throughout the city. The pamphlet is said to have criticized Emperor Menelik and blamed him for the atrocities he committed against the various peoples of Ethiopia.⁴²

The demonstration was finally held at Masqal Square on 17 February 1995. Over a hundred thousand people participated in the demonstration. Representatives of political groups and distinguished individuals made speeches. *Bitwadam* Zawde Gabra Hīwat head of “*Ya Itiopiawinat Dirjit*” said that his organization opposed the celebration of the Centenary at Adwa and the activities of the National Committee to work along with the Italians whom he called our enemies. Following him the acting president of AAPO, *Kañāzmāch* Nakātībab Bakala said on his part:

“... we are told that Emperor Menelik was about to run from the battlefield had it not been for the encouragement of *Ras* Mangasha by northern politicians which is aimed at deconstructing the Ethiopian identity.”⁴³

Moa Anbasā also disclosed that the attempt of the present leaders to attribute the Victory to one ethnic group was tantamount to destroy the true history of the victory.⁴⁴

It was underscored in the demonstration “if the Centenary would be celebrated the pivotal role of Menelik and his generals had to be properly placed”. Similarly, each of the guests delivered speeches to the crowd at Masqal Square. Finally, the demonstrators collected and burnt what they called the anti Menelik leaflet.⁴⁵

Tomār and *Andnat* disclosed that efforts had been made by *Kabale* officials to prevent the residents of Addis Ababa from participating in the demonstration. In this connection, *Andnat* reported that the government deliberately banned city bus service, deployed a strong security and called up urgent meetings and organized recreation programmes.⁴⁶

On the part of the government, it highly criticized the demonstration as having been organized by chauvinists aimed at sowing hatred among the nations and nationalities of Ethiopia. *Abyatawi Democracy* wrote that the demonstration was an attempt to get the people into endless conflict. The report said that the demonstration was comparable to the time of the *Darg* when anti-people speeches were made. It added that the only difference between the two demonstrations was that this time the demonstrators had lost the prerogatives of employing military power because power had fallen in the hands of the oppressed people.⁴⁷

The report of *Abyotawi Democracy* further disclosed that the people of Tigray like the other peoples of Ethiopia mobilized 16,000 soldiers and were supplying provisions and information to the Ethiopian army. The newspaper underlined that it was wrong that the people of Tigray was regarded by AAPO as having had no role in the Victory. The same newspaper rejected and

criticized AAPO to have disseminated unwarranted information that historical artifacts were transferred to Tigray.⁴⁸

Wayin argued that the Victory had first been celebrated not in Addis Ababa but in Adwa. It is only remnants of chauvinistic circles that opposed the celebration of the Centenary at Adwa. It also disclosed that the Victory of Adwa was gained not by individual military leaders as was preached for all times in Ethiopia but by the people of Ethiopia. *Abyotawi Democracy* similarly commented that it was a bygone history that a few military leaders were praised instead of the nations and nationalities of Ethiopia.⁴⁹

4.4.3. The Three Committees, Their Disagreements and Their activities

The effort to celebrate the Centenary was detracted by another factor, disagreement or ill coordination among the Committees. Three factors seem to be responsible for their disagreement. Firstly, there were no clear job descriptions among the three Committees. Secondly, the Tigray Committee was suspicious of the two other Committees that they were working celebrating the Centenary at Addis Ababa. Thirdly, the two Committees, the National and the Tigray committees had government support, which might have exacerbated mutual suspicion between the IES Committee on the one hand, and the National Committee and the Tigray Committee on the other hand.

The Tigray Committee especially pinpointed the major problems it encountered in its activities. According to *Ato Molā Tādā*, the National

Committee in collaboration with the IES Committee of AAU conspired to insist on celebrating the Centenary in Addis Ababa. These committees, he recounts, were arguing that Adwa could not host 2000 guests that would include higher government officials, ambassadors and others. But the Tigray Committee declined this argument and renovated the palace at Adwa with an outlay of 68,000 birr for the President and the Premier, reserved Hotels at Axum to other higher officials and diplomats and 88 tents were acquired from Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission to other guests.⁵⁰

Both Committees, the National Committee and the IES, however, disproved this allegation as false and baseless. According to Professor Bahru, the IES had already notified that the crowing ceremony would be held at Adwa and that there was no reason for the IES to change its stand. The National Committee, on its part, had clearly announced on its first meeting that the celebration of the Centenary would be celebrated at Adwa.⁵¹ It is logical to ask why the Tigray Committee accused the two committees. Now, it may not be able to give a definite answer but it can be said that this is a clear indication of the mutual suspicion and distrust among the committees.

The Tigray Committee impeached the IES Committee for preventing it from getting historical records that would help for research. Especially photographs and historical records that were obtained from the Italian Cultural Institute were made inaccessible to the Tigray Regional Committee, which could have used them in the exhibition at Adwa. However, this was partly solved after successive bargains were made.⁵² According to Professor

Bahru, the intention of the IES was to preserve documents from further destruction. This was the reason why the IES hesitated to allow wider utility.⁵³

Lack of finance appeared to be the other problem that hindered the activities of the Committees. The IES committee tried partly to solve this problem by raising fund from individuals as well as institutions to help its activities. The National Committee got only 100,000 seed money from the government, which was not enough for its activities.⁵⁴ Here, one may inquire why the government failed to allocate money to the Centenary. It is not still possible to give a definite answer. Nevertheless, this indicates that the government had its own ambivalence on the Centenary celebrations. The National Committee resolved its financial shortage by drawing money from Italian residents of Addis Ababa or from the Juventus Club, 600,000 Birr. The National Lottery also put out a lottery ticket to help the activities of the National Committee.⁵⁵

The Tigray Committee on its part raised funds from other different organizations. It got 339,000 from various organizations, AMCE 170,000, CMC 125,000 and VARNERO 44, 000. The Tigray Committee hoped that the National Committee would cover its expense but it got only 100,000 Birr from the National Committee. In this connection, the Tigray Committee had one more complaint against the National Committee for it refused to contribute money to the construction of the road between Adi Abun and Adwa, though finally this was constructed by the Ethiopian Roads Authority.⁵⁶

The other major problem that had its ramifications on the meaning and celebration of the Centenary, according to Dr. Solomon Inqui and Ato Mola Tādā, was the interpretation of the Victory of Adwa. These informants recount that members of the Tigray Committee argued that, although individuals could have played their own role for the Victory, the Victory of Adwa was achieved by the whole people of Ethiopia whereas the IES and the National Committees argued that the Victory was achieved by the wise leadership of Emperor Menelik II.⁵⁷ On the part of the IES, Professor Bahru recounts that the role of the people was very much great but the military mobilization and leadership of Emperor Menelik was indispensable for the total Victory.⁵⁸

It was finally understood, by the Tigray Committee, Ato Molā says, that the successful celebrations of the Centenary required working together among the three Committees. It was towards this goal that, in October 1995 a Centennial board was established. The prime objective of the Centennial board was to oversee the works of the National Committee, to coordinate and provide guidance to both the National and Regional Committees.⁵⁹

In the meantime, each of the three Committees was carrying out its tasks. The Tigray Committee in the memory of the Victory of Adwa published a calendar, stationary letterhead, and envelope in August; in October it published brochures and in January postcards, which showed the battlefields. Moreover, the Committee published three books in Tigrinya: *Raesi Alula Engida (Aba Naga)* by Muluwarq Kidānamāriam (translation of Hagai Erlich's *Ras Alula Aba Nega :A Political Biography*), *Terā Bāshay*

Awalom Hāregot Ab Adwa Quināt(The role of Basha Awalom at the Battle of Adwa) by Ataklti Hagos and Gabrahiwat Bāykadāñ *Haṣe Menelikn Ethiopian* by Dr Solomon Inqui (translation from the Amharic *Atse Menelik nā Itiopia*).

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The National Committee on its part undertook various activities at the national level. Various films were screened in the cinemas of Addis Ababa and Amharic Theatres: *Bālchā Abā Nafso* and *Tewdros* written by Birhānu Zarīhun and Tsegaye Gebremedhin respectively were staged at the National Theatre. A Jamaican music band was brought to Addis Ababa and showed its music at Addis Ababa Stadium. The National Committee also organized literary and art contest in memory of the Centenary of Adwa among high school students.⁶¹

In addition to these, the National Committee along with the Ethiopian Patriots Association renovated Emperor Menelik's statue on 25 February 1996. The statue was painted in a bronze color, which was made to retain its original color by Ethiopian professionals.⁶² But according to *Andnat* and oral informants the color was purposefully chosen to darken the image of the Emperor produced by the Statue.⁶³ Professor Andreas says that there were open criticism on the part of some Oromo intellectuals that the statue of Menelik did not have to be renovated. But the Committee believed that the renewal of the statue would color the Centenary.⁶⁴

The IES similarly organized and opened an exhibition on 26 February 1996 at the National Museum. It was officially opened up by *Waizaro Sindu Gabru*, the daughter of the famous Ethiopian intellectual, *Kantiba Gabru*.

The exhibition which took a year and half for its preparation was organized from different sets of materials: photographs, maps and material items. It had over 2000 titles and over 450 books, magazines, and newspapers. The most important elements of the exhibition were photographs of the major historical personalities and of the places where the battles were fought, treaty letters, edicts, original maps and other relevant documents photographically reproduced..⁶⁵

Various themes from the genesis of European colonialism of Africa up to the peace treaty of Addis Ababa of October 26, 1896 were visually exhibited in this spectacular exhibition. The Ethiopia Orthodox Church provided invaluable materials relevant to the exhibition..⁶⁶

An International Conference organized by the IES was also opened on 26 February 1996. Over 60 research papers were presented by participants from Ethiopia, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, the UK, the USA and Zimbabwe. The themes covered were: the diplomatic and military background, logistics and historiographical and theatrical conception of Adwa as well as African and international ramifications of the Victory of Adwa..⁶⁷

4.4.4. Official Celebrations

The official celebrations of the Centenary could be said to have started on 28 February 1996. This was due to some official events held in Addis Ababa. On the eve of the actual Victory Day, a place on the former Asmara road (presently Haile Gabrasilāsse Avenue) was dedicated to Adwa Victory

Square and a cornerstone was laid for the erection of the Adwa Victory memorial monument. Moreover, a field located at Waraganu in Bole wereda was also dedicated to Adwa Africa Victory Park during which President Nagasso, Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim the then Secretary General of OAU and Mr. V.K Amoak of UN planted trees. The park would include an international trade fair, a palace, a botanical garden, an artificial lake and a hotel. It was also planned that in the park, African nations would put their own symbols and indigenous trees at the botanical garden.⁶⁸

According to Dr Nagasso, the reason why the EPRDF shifted to establish a new square was that it was agreed upon by its members that Emperor Menelik had done evil to many people in Ethiopia and laying wreath at the statue of Menelik would enrage the oppressed people. As a result, EPRDF established a new square at Maganāñā area.⁶⁹

On this similar day, Addis Ababa was decorated with the Ethiopian flag and parades were staged in the streets of Addis Ababa. Especially youngsters and children paraded in the main roads and squares of Addis Ababa were voicing, “The Victory of Adwa is the victory of Africa” “Adwa has proven the demise of colonialism” and “we children say no to war”. Similarly, other programmes were undertaken like panel discussions, sport tournaments and literary and art contests. The programme was over with a bonfire ceremony conducted at Masqal Square by the then President, Nagasso, Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, the then Secretary General of OAU, and other higher officials.⁷⁰

On 1 March, the Victory Day, the celebration was heralded by 21-gun salute. A church service was made at St. George Cathedral with the blessing of *Abun Baslios*, assistant to the Patriarch. *Ato Tefera Walwa*, Chief administrator of Region 14, laid wreath at Menelik II statue. The National Committee and a delegate of the House of Peoples Representatives also placed wreath at the Menelik II statue.⁷¹

Subsequently, the Centenary was celebrated at Masqal square in the presence of President Nagasso, Prime Minister Meles, senior government officials, members of the diplomatic corps and invited guests. The president on the occasion delivered a speech in which he remarked:

“Although the expansionist campaigns carried out in our midst by Emperor Menelik which, resulted in the suppression and annihilation of the various peoples, not to mention the spread of national oppression and humiliation, was the identifying feature of the Emperor’s rule, the role he played in organizing and leading the people in the defensive war against the invading Italian army can not be left unmentioned.”⁷²

It was highlighted in his speech that the Ethiopian nations and nationalities in one way or the other contributed to the Victory. He finally called upon the people to dedicate their energies to development.⁷³ His speech, however, discontented some circles that accused the President of demeaning the role of Emperor Menelik and concocting a new history about the maker of modern Ethiopia.⁷⁴ With regard to his speech, Dr. Nagasso states that the message was agreed upon by members of the EPRDF and that it fully reflected the stand of the government.⁷⁵

His speech was soon followed by the parades of the residents of Addis Ababa organized by their *Kabeles*. Factory workers, civil servants, students

and various sections of the society participated in the parade. The pangs were accompanied by chanting and bragging of the various ethnic groups and placards. A few of the placards were, “Adwa is the Victory of Africa.”, “Adwa is the symbol of our resistance” and “The Victory of Adwa is the legacy of the younger generation.”⁷⁶

Likewise, the clergy of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church attired by beautiful clothes and chanted spiritual songs. Horsemen added color to the celebrations with the tunes of police brass band in the background. Concurrently, the Ethiopian Airforce with its fighter jets displayed a spectacular show. A representative of the Ethiopian patriots symbolically handed over a spear, a shield and the Ethiopian flag to a young man. At midday, the President and the Prime Minister flew to Adwa where the crowning ceremony was held.⁷⁷

The celebrations at Adwa had begun two days before the official date. The town’s people (over 20,000) staged a demonstration expressing their pleasure that the Centenary was celebrated at Adwa. On 27 February, an exhibition was opened at Adwa. The crowning of the International Conference that had already begun in Addis Ababa, on February 26, also continued at Adwa on 28 February.⁷⁸

On 1 March early in the morning, prayer was conducted at the St. George of Manguagua in the presence of *Abun* Pawlos, Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. According to the information obtained from the head of the church, it was for the first time that the ark was taken out

during the Adwa Day. Here it was declared by *Abun Pawlos* that the ark should come out every year 23rd of *Yakātit*.⁷⁹

As it was done in Addis, there was a 21- gun salute for the ceremony while the town's people were chanting, dancing and voicing slogans in both Amharic and *Tirgrña*, the guests were visiting to the near by historical sites.⁸⁰

With the arrival of the President and the Prime Minister, the Adwa Centennial Committee served lunch for about 2000 guests. This celebration was attended also by the Vice Prime Minister *Tamirat Layne*, members of the diplomatic corps, specially invited guests and media representatives At 2.00 p.m. before the formal celebration was started silence was observed for a minute for the martyrs of the Battle of Adwa..⁸¹

Ato Gabru Asrāt, the then President of the Regional State of Tigray, made a short speech in which he said, “Celebrating the centenary at the very scene of the battle is not a slant on history as some chauvinistic circles would like to have it”. Subsequently, President *Nagasso* officially inaugurated the celebration at Unity Square where he made a speech to a large crowd of people converged at the Square.⁸²

Following his speech, President *Nagasso* opened the cultural houses of Amhara, Tigray and Sidamo ethnic groups constructed around the Unity Square and representatives of all the fourteen regions planted seedlings. He also laid a corner stone for a monument to be erected there for the martyrs of the Battle of Adwa. During this time *Ato Dawit Yohannis*, Speaker of the House of Representatives and Mr. *Nigon*, Italian parliament member placed a wreath of flower on the grave of an unknown Italian soldier.⁸³

During the celebrations held at Adwa, various activities were performed to commemorate the Adwa Day. Patriots showed parade at Unity Square, four jet fighters exhibited air show, and various musical performances were staged. The Adwa Centenary was over the next day with the extensive tour to the major historical sights where the battle was fought. The Tigray Committee organized these tours to the President, other higher officials of the government and invited guests.⁸⁴

The gravest mistake of the National Committee, according to members of the Tigray Committee, was that after the Tigray Committee had given notice of its programs and sent invitation letters to the Regions and invited guests, the National Committee without the knowledge of the Tigray Committee, announced that the Centenary would be celebrated both in Addis Ababa and at Adwa. This in turn affected the whole celebrations prepared in Adwa. These informants recount that their Committee knew that the Centenary Celebrations would totally take place at Adwa and it was following the National Committee's announcement that they knew the Centenary would also be celebrated in Addis Ababa.⁸⁵ Oral informants in Adwa told me that the Celebrations in Addis Ababa shared the pageantry the celebrations at Adwa could have had.⁸⁶ On the other hand, members of AAPO recount that it was the demonstration and appeals of AAPO that compelled the government to celebrate the Centenary in both places.⁸⁷

4.5 The Aftermath of the Celebrations of the Centenary

The Centenary celebrations of the Victory of Adwa were undoubtedly celebrated with divided heart among various groups. In the immediate period after the Centenary, however, issues related with the Victory as well as its celebrations went normal.⁸⁸

In the following years, the commemorations of the Victory of Adwa took place as usual at Menelik Square and the ceremony was presided over by the Speaker of the House of Representative, *Ato* Dawit Yohannis. One may wonder in spite of a new Square at Maganaña , why the government celebrated the Victory of Adwa Day at Menelik Square.⁸⁹

With regard to this, Dr. Nagasso says that there was no consensus among members of EPRDF whether laying of wreath had to be made at Menelik Square or not. Especially there were disagreements between the Amhara People Democratic Movement (APDM) and OPDO on this issue. Some members of APDM openly opposed the placing of wreath and the celebrations of the Victory of Adwa Day other than Menelik Square.⁹⁰ We do not exactly know why in spite of the new square constructed during the Centenary at Maganaña that APDM reversed its decision to celebrate the Adwa Day at Menelik Square. This is a clear indication that the ambivalence even among the members of EPRDF was strong.

According to Dr. Nagasso the reason why, as a President, he did not go to the commemoration of the Victory of Adwa, was that he, as an OPDO member, believed that Menelik killed and devastated various ethnic groups and laying wreath under his statue would hurt these people. ⁹¹ Despite the repetitive celebrations of the commemorations of Adwa following the

Centenary, the victory of the Ethiopian army against the Eritrean army at Bādima once again rekindled the commemoration of Adwa.

The people of Ethiopia had heard the Ethiopian victory against Eritrean on 28 February and continued to express their excitement throughout the country waiting up until the 103rd Anniversary of the Victory day of Adwa.⁹² According to Dr. Nagasso, there was no attempt on the part of the government to deliberately coincide the two victories to be celebrated on Yakātit 23; it was all spontaneously organized by the people.⁹³ But there was in fact a call by the Addis Ababa City Administration to celebrate the commemoration at Masqal Square on the eve.⁹⁴

The 103rd Adwa Victory Day was the most celebrated Adwa Victory Day during the time of the EPRDF. This anniversary was started with a special ceremony at Adwa Square where Dr. Petros Olāngo, Deputy Speaker of the House of Peoples Representatives laid a wreath at the foot of the Menelik II statue. Some veteran fighters also showed different patriotic displays and chanted different traditional songs. A large number of the people of Addis Ababa attended the ceremony, which was held at Menelik Square. Ato Assafa Bāyu, President of The Ethiopian Patriots Association told *Addis Zaman* that 'I have never seen a large crowd of people at Menelik II square in my whole life as it is this time.'⁹⁵

This was soon followed by a large demonstration at Masqal Square. It was a spontaneous move, people loaded in cars, hoisting the Ethiopian flag, chanting and bragging were observed in the main streets of Addis Ababa. Arks were also taken out from the various Churches of Addis Ababa to the

Masqal Square. What made this celebration unique was that not only was the celebration taken place at Menelik and Masqal Squares but also the people of Addis Ababa and its vicinity crowded the major streets of Addis Ababa.⁹⁶

It seems that although estimates were not given by the press, the people that took part in the celebration was probably the highest during the time of the EPRDF. A look at the visual document at the ETV, would tell that the number of people attending and the enthusiasm of the people during the 103rd Anniversary were the largest from the Centenary celebrations of the Victory of Adwa.⁹⁷ During the Centenary celebrations, the absence of national cohesion owing to the conflict between the government on the one hand and the opposition on the other hand with regard to the celebrations, no doubt, affected the pageantry of the Centenary celebrations.

Three reasons seem to have brought about this warm celebration during the 103rd Anniversary of the Victory of Adwa. The foremost reason was that the victory of the Ethiopian army against Eritrea created jubilation in all parts of the country. Secondly, the opposition was also in the forefront in rallying the people to express their feeling regarding the twin victories of by putting out reports about the two victories. Thirdly, the fact that the demonstration was spontaneous, it may have driven a large number of people to participate in the Victory Day. It can be argued, therefore, that the 103rd commemoration of the Victory of Adwa was colorfully celebrated *per se* by the initiatives of the people.

The residents of Addis Ababa were voicing ‘Bādime – Adwa, Adwa – Bādime’, ‘Adwa is not only history but is always viable’, ‘Adwa is a covenant which the Ethiopian people showed once again against Isayas’. *Ato* Ali Abdo, Head of the Addis Ababa City Administration, then addressed the large crowd of people. In his speech, he remarked that the recent victory scored at Bādime against the Eritrean army was a witness that the spirit of Adwa was inherited by this generation.⁹⁸

Part Two

Chapter Five

Memories of the Victory in Literature

The narratives of the Victory of Adwa were told and retold through national histories, literatures, the media and popular culture. These had their own contributions in influencing the collective memory of the people regarding the Victory of Adwa. In this part of the thesis, it will be discussed how the memories of Adwa were represented in Literature and the Arts.

In this chapter, an attempt is made to show how, at various times, the memories of Adwa were reflected in literature. The term “literature” is here meant to refer to poetry composed by individuals and works of public historians.

5.1. Poetry

The works of Yoftāhe Niguse, Agañahu Ingidā and Waldagiorgis Waldayohannis contributed in awakening the people through poetry when the country was in the state of war by employing the memories of the Victory of Adwa. With regaining independence, the role of poetry in awakening and teaching the society also increased.¹

Especially in the immediate aftermath of independence, a large number of poems were published in newspapers, magazines and books about Maichew and the resistance war. It was common during the imperial times that poems composed for the memory of the Victory of Adwa praised Adwa in the first few stanzas and discussed Maichew and the war of resistance in greater detail. During the period of the *Darg* one would find a great number of poems about Adwa. Since *Darg* had to combat with external aggression and internal oppositions almost all poems had propaganda

objectives. In the EPRDF time, one would not find many poems in the periodicals.²

The poems on the Victory of Adwa were commemorative poems written during the Victory Day, or poems composed for the memory of the Victory apart from the Adwa Day. These poems may be generally grouped into two with regard to their content. There were poems that praised the Victory and related it with political developments when the poems were written.³ Only a few of them are selected and discussed.

Many of these poems praised Emperor Menelik and attributed the Victory to his able leadership and caliber as a military leader. Here is one poem:

ፋሽስቶች በሙሉ አድዋ ቆመው
ይጠብቁት ነበር ምን ይልክ ብለው

ፋሽስቶች ሲመኩ በመሣሪያቸው
ምን ይልክ በክርኩ ደቋቆሳቸው⁴

The Victory of Adwa was employed during the imperial regime to overplay the latter victory (May 5, 1941) that brought Emperor Hailasselase back to the throne. The following poem is an example:

ያንን ክፉ ጠላት ምኒልክ ቢጥለው
ጉድጓዱን ቆፍሮ ተፈሪ ቀበረው
የተፈሪ ልጆች ኩራት ይገባናል
ትንሣኤ የለውም ከእንግዲህ አርፈናል⁵

There were poems that not only overemphasized Maichew but also seem to exaggerate the role of *Ras* Makonnin at the Battle of Adwa. The following is one of these poems:

በፈረስ በፈረስ ተራውን በፈረስ
ወደ ሰፊው ሜዳ ገብቶ ሲያተራምስ

እንግዲህ ባለ ወኔ ሃይሉን አሳየና
ምርኮውን ጀመረ ያባ ዳኘው ጀግና
በዚህም አካሄድ ከዚያ ሁሉ ሰው
እርዱ መሃል ገብቶ መኮንን ቃኘው⁶

There was also a trend in the pre-1974 poems that St. George, who is believed to have assisted the Ethiopia army at the Battle of Adwa, was glorified in the poems. The following is an example.

ምኒሊክ አምላኩ እንደሚጠብቀው
ከሁሉም ከሁሉም ማስረጃ የሚሆነው
የተዋጋለት ጊዮርጊስ እራሱ ነው
ይህ ሀሰት እንዳይሆን ሁሉም ተናግሮታል
ጠላቶቹም ሁሉ መስክረውለታል⁷

Some other poems mentioned the roles of Empress Taitu and other heroes of Adwa.

ስለ አድዋ ታሪክ መስማት ካማራችሁ
ቀስቅሱት ይነሳ ገበየሁ ያውጋችሁ

አባ ነፍሶ ባልቻ የጦሩ ገበሬ
ሲያሳድደው ውሏል ጠላትን እንደ አውሬ⁸

The Victory of Adwa was described as the most unique event, which exhibited the unity of the Ethiopian people.

በደም ለነፃነት ስለት
አበው የተሰውብሽ ለት
ዓድዋ
የኩሩ ትውልድ ቅርስዋ
የኢትዮጵያዊነት ምስክርዋ
ዓድዋ ⁹

In the early period of the *Darg*, one observes in the periodicals report that the Victory was interpreted as victory achieved by the united force of Ethiopian people. Names of military leaders were not frequently mentioned. The poems put out during the *Darg* period do not cast doubt on the role of the military leaders especially the Emperor and the Empress with the exception of the following poem.

ኸረ አድዋ ንገሪኝ
እኔ ግራ ገባኝ
ንጉስና ንግስት ብቻቸውን ሆነው ተዋግተው አረቱ?
ወይስ ስፊው ሕዝብ ነው የድል ባለቤቱ¹⁰

There were poems, which articulated that the spirit of freedom people inherited from the Victory of Adwa rekindled a popular revolution that did away an obsolete feudal regime.

በአድዋ ሜዳ ላይ በደም የተፃፈው

ድላችን አኩሪ ነው ዓለም ይተርከው
በወረሰነው ወኔ በጭቁኖች ትግል
በአድጋሪያን ላይ ደግመንዋል ያን ድል¹¹

As was said earlier, poetry was employed especially by the *Darg* to arouse national sentiment of the people. When the country was in a state of war with Somalia, poems were published in the newspapers. These poems stated that the people of Ethiopia would die to keep the territorial integrity of their country. One of these poems goes as follows:

ያድዋ አርበኛ ጀግና ያገሬ ሰው
ታሪኩን በታሪክ እንደገና አድሰው
የሱማሌ መሪዎች ምነው አበዳችሁ
እንኳን ዑጋዴንን እንድ እፍኝ አሸዋም
ዘግነን እንሰጣችሁ¹²

There were poems, which mentioned the Victory of Adwa as a black victory and the victory of all oppressed people. Many of the poems regarded the Victory of Adwa as a victory against imperialism. The following is one of such poems.

አድዋ አድዋ! ፀረ ኢምፒሪያሊስት ትግልዋ
ዛሬም ነገም ይውላል የድል መረዋ¹³

In the subsequent years, the *Darg* encountered serious challenges from the EPLF and TPLF. Since memory is very much selective, the *Darg* seemed to avoid using the memories of the Victory of Adwa to apply to the Eritrean problem. Instead, *Dogali* was best exploited by the *Darg*. However, Adwa throughout the *Darg* period was instrumental in mobilizing the people.

There were poems, which called upon the people to defend the motherland as the heroes of Adwa had done against Italy. The following is an example.

ያ የአድዋው ገድል ትኩስ ደም ሸተተኝ
ያ የማይጨው ውሎ አሁን አሁን አለኝ
እንዲያው ምን ሲደረግ ወያኔ ይድፈረኝ¹⁴

There were a large number of poems, which stated that the youth inherited the spirit of the Victory of Adwa. This extract is taken from one of such poems.

ዛሬም ዐድዋ ነው በየ ጠረፋቸን
የእነርሱ ልጆች ነን አልሞተም ወኔያችን¹⁵

TPLF regarded the people of Tigray to have played the decisive role in the Victory of Adwa. Awalom’s contribution to the Victory of Adwa is stated in the following poem.

ዓድዋ ዓድዋ ንገር ኒስኪ ኣውዓሎም እንታይበለ
እንታይ ሰረሐ
ጅግንነት ትግራዊይ ከመይ ነይሩ ሜላ?
ዕለት ለካቲት ክነስተባህላ
ዓድዋ እምባኣር ከስ እሺ ከዝክር ብቁንጣሩ
ዓለም ዝፈለጦ ጅግንነት ተጋሩ

ተጋድሎ ተጋሩ ጅግንነት ህዝብና ዓለም ዝፈለጦ
ቅያ ወለድና ክብርና ዝበሉ
ዓድና ዝበሉ
ምድሪ ትምክሕተኛ ዝበለ እንተበለ
ሓቂ ኣድበስቢሱ ታሪክ እንተሓመለ
ቅያ ወለድና እቲ ውሩይ መስተንክር

ፍፁም አይሃስስን ንዝንትኣሉቲ ተሀሲቡ ይነበር¹⁶

The change of government in May 1991 resulted in transformation of the content of the poems written on the Victory of Adwa. In the following poem, ethnic groups who took part in the Battle of Adwa are mentioned:

**ትግራው ከአማራው መከረ
አሮሞው ቤዛ ህይወቱን ዘከረ
ሽናሻው ከጉራጌው ጋር
በአንድ ቋንቋ ፎከረ
ኸረ ስንቱን አንስቸው
ኸረ ስንቱን ጠርቸው
የቱን ከየቱ ለይቸው
በጅምላ ልጥራው እንጅ
ልበለው ኢትዮጵያዊ ¹⁷**

A few months after the EPRDF took power, as was discussed in the first part of this thesis, there was a controversy between two parties on whether the statue of Emperor Menelik had to be demolished or not. During this time, a poem that came out in *Addis Zaman* disclosed that Emperor Menelik's Statue did not have to be demolished. Here is the poem:

**ዳኘው ነውር ሆኖ ጣት ተቀሰረበት
አፍ ተከፍተበት
ዳኘው ግን አይፈርስም እናስበዋልን
ግን... ለምን ይፈርሳል?
ዳኘው እኮ ጌጥ ነው ክብር ነው ውበት ነው¹⁸**

There were complaints especially in the private press that TPLF/EPRDF was deliberately deconstructing Ethiopian Nationalism. They

reported that the government took no notice of symbols of Ethiopian identity like Adwa. This was expressed in the following poem.

አ... አድዋ!... አድዋ!... አድዋ!
አትን ጠፍ ከውስጣችን አትዘንጋ አስከ ምፅአት
አትቅር! አንጣህ! አንጣህ! ያምጣህ! ዓመት አመት!¹⁹

The Centenary celebrations were bone of contention among the different parties. AAOP organized a big demonstration demanding not only the celebration of the Centenary in Addis Ababa but also repudiating the stance of the government regarding the interpretation of the Victory. The following poem disclosed that the underlying reason for the Victory of Adwa was the skillful mobilization of the people by Emperor Menelik.

እንደ ፍልፈል መሬቱን ቆፍሮ
ጣሊያን ትግሬ ገብቷልና መርቶ
እኔ ቀድሜያለሁ ተከተለኝ
ያለው ያ ሰው ማን ነበር
ምኒሊክ አል ነበር?²⁰

Ethiopian victory against the Eritrean army at Bādma in 1999 was concurrently celebrated with the 103rd Anniversary of the Battle of Adwa. This time an attempt was made to relate the Victories of Adwa and Bādma In the following poem, it is said that this generation once again repeated a victory against an invader, as the heroes of Adwa had defeated the Italians.

መቶ ሶስት አመት ተገዘሽ
ዛሬ ከእኛ ስትደርሽ
ወጉ ደረሰን... ልጆችሽ

አገብድደን አይደለም... የጠበቅንሽ

የሚያስተውል... ከአድዋ... አሻግሮ

በባድመ በሽራሮ²¹

5.2 Plays

During the eve of Italian invasion, members of *Ya Itiopia Hagar Fiqir Mahbar* might have done some attempt to use theatre to transmit patriotic messages. In the post-occupation period the value of employing plays to convey national issues was understood. This resulted in the rise of a number of historical dramas. A few among these were “*Nitṣuh Dam*” by Afawork Adāfre, “*Naṣānat*” by Captain Nalbandian, “*Ya Yakātīt Elqīt*” by Waizaro Sindu Gabru “*Yadam Dimṣ*” by Makonnin Endālkachaw “*Tewodros*” by Girmāchāw Takla Hāwāriat, “*Hanibal*” by Kabbada Michāel. These post-occupation productions mostly paid attention to the war of resistance Ethiopians waged against the Italians during the occupation period.²²

In the post-revolution period, a few more other historical dramas were also produced. To cite a few, “*Tewodros*” by Tsegaye Gebremedhin “*Balchā Abānafso*” by Birhanu Zarihun and “*Alulā Abānagā*” by Māmo Widnah. The *Darg* government declared that theatre had to serve not only as a forum of entertainment but also as an agency of political education and as an instrument for the elevation of the political consciousness of the mass.²³

In spite of its place in the history of the country, the Victory of Adwa was not well represented in plays. Since the post-occupation period, only three dramas were produced. It may not be possible to find out why the

Victory of Adwa was overlooked in plays compared to, for instance, the plays on Tewodros.²⁴

The first of these dramas was entitled “*Kañaw nā Adwa*” written by Malāka Hailu in 1953 (E. C.) in a form of poetry. The play narrates the events from the signing of the Wuchale Treaty to the Battle of Adwa. The play begins when *Dajāzmach* Makonnin had been entrusted by Emperor Menelik II to go to Rome to get the Wuchale Treaty approved. *Dajāzmach* Makonnin, however, recognized that Article 17 could make Ethiopia the colony of Italy. He then refused to sign the whole agreement and came back to Addis Ababa. Upon his arrival, he was made *Ras* and was given additional fiefs.²⁵

The play narrates the events that led to the Battle of Adwa. The refusal of Ras Makonnin displeased the Italians who soon sent their envoy Antonelli to negotiate with Ethiopia. He employed although in vain to divide the court of Menelik by disseminating a false rumor that *Ras* Mekonnin had insulted Empress Taitu. With the arrival of Antonelli negotiation started. He agreed that Article 17 had to be cancelled. But in the new agreement both had subsequently signed the Ethiopians skillfully deceived Antonelli. Though he pretended to have known Amharic, he was fooled by the Ethiopians because he could not realize the Amharic “*Titanawa*” (means we have cancelled it). He had thought that the new agreement would annul only Article 17 of the Wuchale Treaty but the Emperor meant the whole Treaty. He realized the deception the next day and he outrageously tore the agreement before the Emperor, the Empress and other higher officials of the government. He warned Ethiopia that the Italian government would retaliate

for the contempt Ethiopia had shown. The court of Menelik in response told him that Ethiopia would defend its sovereignty. The Italians also sent another envoy to achieve their aim. However, it was all fruitless.²⁶

The temporary alliance of *Ras Mangashā* with the Italians and their subsequent re-allegiance with the Emperor is narrated. The play narrets that when Emperor Menelik heard the invasion and conquest of Tigray preparations for war started on the Ethiopian side. Emperor Menelik declared mobilization and immediately the Ethiopian army moved to repel the Italians out of Ethiopia. The first and the second victories were scored at Alage and Makale respectively. At Adwa, the final Victory was scored by the gallant Ethiopian army with *Ras Makonnin* as commander-in-chief and architect of the battle.²⁷

The play has 42 characters among which the major ones represented were: Emperor Menelik, Empress Taitu, *Ras Makonnin*, *Fitawrari Gabayahu*, *Dajāzmach Bālchā*, *Ṣahaḫī Tizaz Gabrasilāsse*, *Ras Mangashā*, *Ras Alulā*, *Wagshum Guangul* on the Ethiopian side and the four Italian generals, Count Antonelli and Fransisco Crispi on the Italian side. Though mention is made to Emperor Menelik and his consort, Empress Taitu, whose role at the Victory of Adwa was little doubted when the play was written, the play focuses much on the place of *Ras Makonnin* during the Battle of Adwa.²⁸

Tafara argues that the play exaggerates the role of *Ras Makonnin* both diplomatically and militarily. Moreover, the play makes *Ras Makonnin* the first person who recognized the problem of the Wuchale Treaty.²⁹ The Fact that the play was written during the reign of Emperor Hailaselasie, the

son of *Ras Makonnin*, the play no doubt aimed at adding more glory and prestige to the family of the Emperor. This tells us that how memories of the Victory were used during the imperial period.

The second drama staged in the National Theatre entitled “*Wuchale 17*” was written in 1982 (E.C) by Captain Tāmrat Gabayahu and was directed by Tasfāye Gabramāriām. This play was written at the time political instability reigned in the country due to the war with EPLF and TPLF. It was also the time when the *Darg* employed the available forums to arouse the people to defend the country from what the government called forces of anti-unity. Towards this end, one of the forums used was theatre. The Ministry of Culture and Sports was commissioned by the government to make theatres work on historical dramas to arouse patriotism. “*Wuchale 17*” was an answer for the order of the government. The theatre had originally been called by the author “*Dañaw nā Wilu*” but was later renamed “*Wuchale 17*”.³⁰

The play narrates a history of seven years from the Wuchale Treaty up to Emperor Menelik’s decree for war. The whole drama revolves around one central theme, article 17 of the Wuchale Treaty. The plot begins when *Ras Makonnin* went to Rome to ratify the Treaty, which Emperor Menelik and Count Antonelli had agreed. Italy soon publicized the terms of the Treaty to European powers and announced Ethiopia as its protectorate.³¹

In the meantime, his consort, Empress Taitu and other trusted officials made Emperor Menelik cognizant of the danger of Article 17 of the Treaty. Emperor Menelik hence called upon his council to decide on the issue. The Italians, Count Antonelli and Salimbe on the other hand,

continued to persuade Emperor Menelik to consent to the terms of the Treaty. Towards their end, the Italians bribed some big officials of the Ethiopian government to stand on their side. Nevertheless, Emperor Menelik, Empress Taitu and others stood fast and rejected the claims of the Italians. One of the devices the Italians used was to divide Ethiopians in order to weaken the country. Towards this goal, the Italians employed the policy of divide and rule and alienated Emperor Menelik and *Ras Mangashā* of Tigray. This proved a failure when the latter re-allied with the Emperor. Their total effort finally ended in fiasco when Emperor Menelik abrogated the whole Treaty. Subsequently, Antonelli and the Italians decided to achieve their aim by force of arms. Ethiopians also opted for war than to bow down to the prerequisites of the Italians. The Italians began the war, which brought about humiliating defeat to them.³²

The play involved over 40 characters. The major historical personalities were represented and new characters were artistically included. Empress Taitu was depicted as a formidable woman whose wise council and relentless push made the Emperor prefer war. Emperor Menelik was projected as an able diplomat who did everything to avoid war.³³

The drama highlights: love to one's country, unity of a country, the importance of the Ethiopian flag, independence, and the vice of internal conflict in the face of an external threat. Since the theatre was written in 1990 at the highest of the civil war, the writer tried to address lessons from the Victory of Adwa to the problems prevalent during that time.³⁴

Although written in 1990 the drama was displayed after the EPRDF took power. The coming of EPRDF made the drama very popular. This was because, as stated by oral informants, the drama was shown at the time when EPRDF was regarded to have had no sense of Ethiopian unity. The drama was staged for over two years. EPRDF did not ban the drama since the drama did not openly criticize the new regime.³⁵

5.3 Narratives of the Victory.

The memories of the Victory of Adwa were also transmitted to us through reproductions of this historic event, in newspapers and magazines, radio and television programmes. There is no doubt that the press disclosed historical interpretations of the winning group. In the period under discussion, interpretations of the Victory of Adwa differed. Each regime clearly pinpointed what it wanted to emphasize regarding the memories of the Victory of Adwa. Yet, the three regimes invariably employed the Victory of Adwa to mobilize the people.³⁶

The investigations of sources on periodicals have shown in the period under discussion i.e. 1941-1991 that one would see similar, repetitive reports and stories about the Victory largely during Adwa Day. Every year the commemoration of Adwa was observed, the history was told through narratives. In times of wars, the memories of Adwa were used to call upon the people for general mobilization. But direct references to the memories of Adwa were available only during the Adwa Day.

It is to be noted, however, that throughout the *Darg* period, in particular, frequent mentions were made to the contributions of the

forefathers in handing over an independent country. It seems that the memories of the Victory of Adwa were activated by the commemoration. Because of lack of sources, it is preferred here only to show the major focus of the accounts on Adwa put out in the newspapers on the Victory of Adwa.

The imperial regime was a time when the state and the church were closely related. It was believed that the divine help of St. George resulted in the Victory of Adwa. As a result, the narratives on the Victory of Adwa attributed the Victory to St. George. Moreover, the narratives reported largely on individual military leaders especially Emperor Menelik, *Ras Makonnin* and other lords who performed heroic deeds at the Battle of Adwa.³⁷

During the *Darg* period the glorious Victory of Adwa's narratives was told in various forums. The accounts written regarding the Victory of Adwa emphasized that the Ethiopian people achieved the Victory of Adwa. Tough mention was made to individual military leaders largely the accounts tried to show that the Victory was gained owing to the unity of the people. It was also emphasized in the newspapers that the Victory was a victory against imperialism that the oppressed people of Ethiopia scored.³⁸

Following the change in government in 1991, the story told about Adwa was changed. The government publications emphasized on the participation of the nations and nationalities of the country at the Battle of Adwa. Mention was not frequently made to the military leaders of the Victory. Accounts on the history of Adwa were not also published in the newspapers up to 1996, the Centenary. The government publications largely

tried to relegate Emperor Menelik to the back; they brought Empress Taitu forward for reasons of gender politics.³⁹

Particularly with the victory achieved by the Ethiopian army at Bādima, both private, party (government and opposition) newspapers reported on the heroism of the Ethiopian people. The government media played a leading role in amplifying the history of Adwa, which in the earlier years were not reported regarding it. Party newspapers of EPRDF, *Efoyta* and *Abyotawi Democracy* that had never reported on the Victory of Adwa put out reports following the Victory of the Ethiopian Army in 1999.⁴⁰

5.4 Public Historiography.

It is true that the Victory of Adwa has been one of the most if not the dominant theme discussed, interpreted and reinterpreted in historical discourses of this country. The international conference the IES had organized, to single out one, has resulted in the production of research productions on several themes on the Victory of Adwa.

Works of this type are not part of this discussion because their preponderance among the people at large seems to be less than works of popular historians, in the sense that these works are usually written in foreign languages, in which the people at large are not conversant. It is, therefore, believed that the discussion of public historiography would somehow tell us how memories of Adwa were transmitted to the people. Since most of the writers would tend to support mostly the views of governments, they would also indicate the dominant interpretations of the ruling regimes. Most of these works did not use foreign sources in their materials and this is

one additional factor that would help us see interpretations of the Victory from within. Furthermore, it seems that the accounts of these writers were published in the newspapers and periodicals during the commemorations of Adwa.

In the period under discussion, there are a few popular works produced on the Victory of Adwa. However, they do not take Adwa as a central theme. They discuss the Victory of Adwa as part of their narration of the history of the country. Only one book with a direct discussion of the Victory of Adwa is available: *Adwa nā Menelik*.⁴¹ Moreover, the Victory of Adwa, needless to mention other themes, was one of the issues that the private press in particular paid attention by putting out reinterpretations of the Victory during the reign of EPRDF.

Apart from these productions, literary works on the Victory are absent. Compared to the substantial works on Shaka of Zulu, works on the Victory of Adwa has not been a subject of literary workings.⁴² Two novels which are not directly related with the Victory of Adwa are available, *Sila Agar Limātinā Yahizb Andnat* by Damaka Matāfariā and *Ras Alulā Abā Nagā* by Māmo Widinah.⁴³

Two kinds of literature can be identified with regard to the content of public historiography. The first group of writers focuses on the genesis of the conflict, the Victory and the role of individual military leaders at the battle. The second category of works focuses not on the battle it self but other themes in relation to the Victory.

Kabbada Dastā in his book entitled “*Matawawakiā*” writes that Emperor Menelik was cognizant of world politics and sought alliance with Italy to solve the internal problems of the country. The alliance was reinvigorated when the Wuchale Treaty was signed between the two countries in 1889.⁴⁴ When Emperor Menelik signed the Treaty with Italy, the Treaty originally meant to expand friendship and commerce.⁴⁵

With the passage of time, however, the Treaty proved to be trickery. Emperor Menelik became aware of the deception when he wrote letters to European powers about his new tenure as Emperor of Ethiopia. These powers, however, refused to recognize him on the ground that he should have sent his letters through Italy, which they regarded Italy as the protector of Ethiopia.⁴⁶

Their response enraged Emperor Menelik who then wrote an urgent letter to Emperor Umberto I that the deal was not for Ethiopia to use Italy as a must in her relationship with the outside world. Nevertheless, his letter got no response. He also wrote to the Italian parliament demanding the amendment of the Treaty. The parliament too did not respond to his request in the belief that revising the Treaty would discredit the Italian people in the face of barbarians.⁴⁷

Following this, Emperor Menelik abrogated the whole Treaty in 1893 and wrote letters to other European powers that the treaty would no more bind his country. The Italians through their envoys tried to persuade Emperor Menelik to accept the Treaty. Simultaneously, the Italians entered into allegiance with *Ras Mangashā* of Tigray. Their intention was to divide

the Ethiopian people. Beka Nāmo says *Ras Mangashā* tactically allied with the Italians to acquire ammunitions. When he obtained military equipment, he rejoined the camp of Emperor Menelik and soon began to attack the Italians. Taklaṣādīq says in the *koati* conflict between *Ras Mangashā* and the Italians the Ethiopians in spite of their initial success were defeated by the reinforcement from Asmara.⁴⁸

The Italians pursued *Ras Mangashā*, advanced to Tigray, and controlled the area as far as Alage. Subsequently, Emperor Menelik sent an ultimatum to the Italians to withdraw but they answered in contempt. Hence, he declared mobilization.⁴⁹

Kabbada Dastā says that the Italians regarded their victory against *Ras Mangashā* as a final victory. Nevertheless, this was soon reversed when *Ras Makonnin* defeated the invading force at Alage. Taklaṣādīq says that at Alage, *Ras Makonnin* and the other *Rases* encircled the enemy and battered it for two hours in which Ethiopians scored victory their first victory. Ali Kabbada says that at Alage, the Italians were told to renounce the war but they refused. Though Ethiopian heroes used to obey military commands, they broke the Italian fortress and controlled it by paying a large sacrifice. Bekā Namo says that the Ethiopian army led by Gabayahu took a lightning attack against the Italians before an order had been commanded. Gabayahu courageously broke their fortress and was soon joined by *Ras Makonnin*. Petrides says that *Ras Makonnin* ordered to besiege the mountain but without the order of *Ras Makonnin*, *Fitawrari* Gabayahu broke the fortress and scored a remarkable victory.⁵⁰

The Ethiopian army led by the Emperor, subsequently, marched to Makale where the enemy built a strong fortress. The Ethiopian army attempted to break the fortress but was not able to do that since Italians fought strongly and they had already occupied a strategic area.⁵¹ Finally a device was found to besiege Makale and to deprive the Italians from getting water. Bekā Namo says that the besiege of Makale was the cordial work of Taitu and Abata. Taitu proposed to deprive the Italians of getting access to water. This strategy was successful as a result the Italians had to seek clemency from the Emperor. Petrides, on the other hand, says that *Ras Makonnin*, as he was the wisest men of all, proposed the idea to encircle the Italian fortress and to deny them of getting access to water. His proposal was implemented. The Italians when they were unable to cop up with the shortage of water they asked leniency from the Emperor which was facilitated by *Ras Makonnin*.⁵²

In spite of their defeat, at Alage and Makale, the Italians did not give up their invasion. However, their defeat at both places had forced the Italian commander in chief to seek peace talk with Emperor Menelik. But by the time he got reinforcement from Eritrea, he decided to fight the Ethiopian army.⁵³

Kabbada Dastā writes that the Italians planned that since Ethiopians would go to church on Sundays, the Italians thought it right to commence the war on Sunday at Adwa. Ali Kabbada writes that the Italians for fear of the valiant Ethiopians were not ready to wage a conventional war. Instead, they chose a very appropriate time when Ethiopian troops went off to search

for provisions to far places and when the emperor was attending church service.⁵⁴

The Italians organized their army into four Generals with over 20,000 soldiers and the Ethiopians with over a 100,000 soldiers and led by ten big warlords including the Emperor fought the Battle at Adwa. In the early morning of 29 February, the war was broken out when Italians began to move on towards the Ethiopian army. This time they were met by the armies of *Ras Mangashā*, *Ras Michāel WagShum* Guangul. Petrides gives a different account that *Ras Makonnin* designed the war plan and upon his leadership, the Ethiopian army began offensive attacks against the Italians. *Ras Makonnin's* army ceaselessly fought hand-to-hand combat. Shortly after, the Ethiopian army encircled and smashed the Italian army. *Ras Mekonnin* though wounded at the battle organized and led the Ethiopian army as an ordinary soldier.⁵⁵

The war was fought on the Ethiopian side by obsolete ammunitions where as the Italians were armed with the best weapons. The fight took the whole day in which the Ethiopians showed their bravery, engaged a hand-to-hand combat, and smashed their enemy. The war finally ended with the victory of Ethiopians. From the Italian side nearly there were five thousand dead and wounded and over two thousand were captured. Two of the Italian generals were killed and other two were captured. On the Ethiopian part, the total causality reached over ten thousand.⁵⁶

With the conclusion of the war, *Taklatšādīq* writes that Emperor Menelik wanted to cross the Marab to chase out the Italians from Eritrea. He

was however advised that the army was exhausted and the Italian reinforcement in Eritrea would be mobilized and the Victory could be reversed. He was convinced and the army did not march to Eritrea.⁵⁷

The second category of works is productions of the post-1991 period. This period has exhibited the productions of large corpuses of materials on the past of the country. Three books published after 1991 to the interest of the theme have come up with their out looks on the Battle of Adwa and its repercussions. Three of these works go against the accounts of the earlier writers in that they unanimously relegate Menelik.

Habtamāriām Assafā in his book “*Ya Itiopia Tārīk Ṭiyakewoch nā Bāhloch*”(Ethiopian, History, Questions and Cultures) raises issues on the history and culture of this country. He gives a section to review Afawork Gabrayasus’s book “*Aṣe Menelik nā Itiopia*”. He writes that Afawork deliberately distorted the evil story of amputation done against the Eritreans following the Battle of Adwa.⁵⁸

According to Afawork, Emperor Menelik was wrongly guided by *Ras* Mangashā and amputated Eritreans who fought on the side of the Italians. Habtamāriām, however, repudiates this as absolute false. According to Habtamāriām, Afawork did this for two reasons first since *Ras* Mangashā was power contender to the throne; the attempt was to deny him of getting any assistance from the Eritrean side. Second, the atrocity committed by Emperor Menelik resulted in disgrace to the Emperor by the European powers. Afawork, therefore, intended to redress the Emperor’s mistake by blackening *Ras* Mangashā.⁵⁹

In a book written by Tawalda Tikue entitled “*Ya Ithiopia Andnat nā Italiā*”(Ethiopian Unity and Italy) he rejects the idea that the Eritreans deserted Ethiopia and served as mercenaries to the Italian army. He states that the reason why the Eritreans fought on the side of the Italians was that they were forcefully conscripted by the Italians. He argues that if the word “*Banda*” (traitor) is right, Menelik was the foremost ‘Banda’.⁶⁰

He states six reasons as to why he called Menelik the foremost traitor. First, when the Italian presence had not been known in northern Ethiopia, Menelik established a strong amicable relationship with them. Second, when Italians were killed both at Dogali and in Afar, he pledged to retaliate for the Italians. Third, when Menelik wrote letters to European governments notifying the boundary of Ethiopia, he did not mention Asmara and Masawa and he sold the two areas to the Italians. Fourth, when the Italians requested Menelik that they wanted soldiers, he allowed them the land up to Marab and in his Wuchale Treaty, he also added Kunama to their colony, which the Italians used to undertake forced conscription. Fifth, after the Battle of Adwa, Menelik should have pursued the Italians but he left the Marab Milāsh people under slavery. Six, when the Egyptians promised to acknowledge him as King of Kings, he agreed to fight Emperor Yohannis IV on their side.⁶¹

He argues that Eritrea was created due to Menelik’s desertion of the people of Eritrea. Shawan and other lords’ insisted on regaining Eritrea and driving the Italians out of Eritrea but Menelik gave priority to his throne over Eritrea and its people.⁶²

In a history book written in Tigriña entitled “*Wāfri Midhan*” (Campaign of Rescue) Ataklti Hagos writes that when Italy invaded northern Ethiopia Menelik mobilized a huge army to Tigray. However, the mobilization had two fold aims, to fight Italy and to eliminate future possible rivalry from Tigray. He says that since Menelik was suspicious of the people of Tigray Menelik declared, (ትግሬም ቀላል ጠላት አይደለምና ስንቅ አትያዝ) “Since Tigreans are not also easy enemy do not carry provisions.” The mobilized army was told to ravage and impoverish Tigray. The impoverishment was greatly exacerbated due to the large number of people who accompanied the Emperor and whose presence in Tigray had nothing to do with the mobilization.⁶³

Though Emperor Menelik mobilized a large army, the people of Tigray under the leadership of *Ras Mangashā* also gallantly defended the invading foe. He says that after the Italians defeat at Adwa, Menelik’s army also killed a large number of Tigreans. He argues also that there was no Italian reinforcement both in Asmara and in Massawa following the Victory of Adwa. The architect of the Battle of Adwa, *Ras Alulā*, through his spy, the infamous *Awalom*, had all information about the Italians in Eritrea and informed no presence of Italians in Eritrea. *Ras Alulā* went to the extent of asking the Emperor to drive the Italians out of Eritrea but he failed by the refusal of the Emperor. This was because, he says, Emperor Menelik had thought that the Tigreans of Tigray proper and Eritrea would join hand in hand to dethrone him.⁶⁴

Three views came out in the discussions of public historiography in the newspapers. It is assumed that there were other views that either

supported any of the three or had their own interpretations on the subject. Since they were not put out in the newspapers, I have not considered them in this thesis.

In connection with the Victory of Adwa, one group argues that the Victory was achieved due to the wise leadership of Menelik in mobilizing the Ethiopian people while the second group argues that since the war was fought in Tigray the role of the people of Tigray was very much pivotal for the Victory of the Ethiopian army. The third group argues that the Battle of Adwa was not fought by the Oromos or by the peoples of the southern Ethiopia. The first two groups represented the interpretations of Political Parties, AAPO and TPLF respectively and the third one appears to be the view of an individual on the subject.

According to *Andnat* an interview with someone was broadcast on the Voice of the Revolutionary People of Tigray that in which the person said “Menelik was about to flee and the Victory of Adwa belongs to *Ras Mangasha*”, *Andnat* rejected that this information was acquired from an Italian writer and hence unreliable. It inquired whether the Italian writer was there when Mangashā rebuked Menelik?. Or did Mangashā tell the Italian writer after the war? *Andnat* pinpointed that the whole attempt was to make Mangashā the architect of the victory.⁶⁵

Andnat stated that it was at the time when *Ras Mangashā* was the governor of Tigray that the Italians had crossed the Marab and controlled Adwa, Adigrat and Makale. It was also at this time that Meneik had mobilized the Ethiopian people to rescue Tigray. During this time, the people

of Tigray served as spies and fought the enemy on the side of Menelik's army and contributed a lot towards the Victory.⁶⁶

In this connection, *Andnat* asked who broke the fortress of Alage? Was it not *Fitawrari* Gabayahu and *Kañāzmāch* Tāfasa, What about Makale? Was it not *Dajāzmāch* Bālchā and Gabayahu. If Menelik had achieved victory all along from Alage, why he had to run at Adwa? Why was it that *Ras* Mangashā who knew the Italians had allowed the Italians to reach as far as southern Tigray. The article commented that those individuals who wanted to deconstruct our history and to cause endless bloodshed among us prepared this account.⁶⁷

According to *Andnat*, the Soldiers were all traditionally conscripted soldiers who went to the battle with their own supplies. But without the able leadership of the Emperor, the Victory could not have been achieved as seen at the Battle of Matama. *Andnat* added that Menelik was extremely aware of the economic conflict that existed among major European powers and exploited the situation to get assistance from Russia, which helped his country to get recognition as an independent sovereign state. This is a witness for his ingenious in politics and diplomacy.⁶⁸

Andnat rejected the report of some groups who were reported to have said that Ethiopians had been forcefully mobilized by Menelik to save his throne and that Tigray was impoverished due to this war. *Andnat* noted that this group failed to recognize that had Menelik army not saved Tigray, the people of Tigray would have been colonized. Their account, *Andnat* noted, was aimed at dividing the unity that existed among the Ethiopian people.⁶⁹

Andnat argued that to see the Victory of Adwa without Menelik was impossible. Some groups, it added, consciously failed to mention the names of military generals from other ethnic groups. However, they highlighted the contribution of a few individuals from one ethnic group and tried to make a new history.⁷⁰

Regarding the second view, much can not be said mainly because *Wayin*, the organ of TPLF, did not report on this theme. As a result I have made use of an account which I got from the Voice of Revolutionary People of Tigray.⁷¹

The Voice of the Revolutionary People of Tigray during the 98 Anniversary of the Victory of Adwa, it was broadcast that since the war was fought in Tigray, the price the people of Tigray paid was immense. Though this was the reality, the report disclosed, elements of the defunct chauvinistic groups said that the people of Tigray allowed the invasion of the Italian soldiers and had no contribution in the Victory. The report stated that this group said that exclusively Amharas fought the battle. But the Victory was achieved by the united force of the Ethiopian people. The people of Tigray played a pivotal role to the Victory of Adwa. The report also disclosed that in spite of the Victory achieved by the people of Ethiopia, the Victory left Tigray impoverished.⁷²

The third view was published in *Urgi*. In an article put out in *Urgi* referring to an interview given to the Voice of America, Dutch Welle and the publications in the government and private press argued that all Ethiopians did not participate at the Battle of Adwa. Even from the areas conquered by

Menelik, it was the Shewan army, which marched to Adwa apart from Walayta.⁷³

Urgi asked why the publications in Addis Ababa attributed the victory as "The victory of all peoples of Ethiopia" and why the victory was so exaggerated ?. It asked what the origin of this idea was and why should the victory be reverberated as the Addis Ababa press claimed. It commented that this was aimed, by the government, at killing the demands of some ethnic groups the right for self-determination up to and including secession.⁷⁴

Urgi in another publication put out an article written by an individual entitled, "A third party opinion on the Victory of Adwa." The writer argued that the idea that the Victory of Adwa broke the yoke of colonialism is far from the truth. He said that the cases of the Somalis and the Oromos, two peoples who remain colonized by a black colonialist, disproves this argument.⁷⁵

The writer argued that at the time when he was a child he heard more about the conquest of Oromia by Menelik than the Victory of Adwa. There were some Oromos who were made subservient to the Amharas and only those Oromos who, without their will, were taken to the battle. They were the Oromos of Gulele, Gelan, Abicho and Meta Oromos. The other Oromos, however, did not take part in the battle. He wrote that while the war at Adwa was being fought, the other southern peoples were being hunted like animals. The morale of the Oromos was in fact crushed after Adwa. Therefore, he noted, it is right that the Oromos had to commemorate the victory with deep mournings.⁷⁶

He said “for deliberate political reasons we are told that the Victory also belongs to us (the west, east, south, south east and south west of the country)”. The writer emphasized that except a few Oromos mentioned earlier the rest of the Oromos did not participate in the war and had, therefore, no share in the Victory. He argued that Menelik let alone to mobilize the Oromos and peoples of the south, had no relationship at all with them.⁷⁷

He wrote that the Oromos could not say that the Victory belonged to them because they have been colonized, ruthlessly killed and enslaved by a black colonialist. He noted that an Oromo could not feel proud of the Victory since the ammunition that killed the Italians also killed the Oromos. He commented finally that the Victory of Adwa Day should not be celebrated in Oromia if Oromia would remain part of Ethiopia.⁷⁸

Chapter Six

The Victory of Adwa in the Arts

In the following chapter, an attempt is made to show how the Arts represented the Victory of Adwa.

6.1 Films

It is true that the underdevelopment of this country has had its impact on the production of films of any kind. Only two films are available in the study period, which will be discussed here. The first one is the work of Abāta Makurīa produced during the Centenary celebrations of Addis Ababa. The other was produced by the IES because of the Centenary celebrations of the Victory of Adwa.

Abāta Makurīa produced his film: “A March to the Battle of Adwa” at the time when the Centenary of the foundation of Addis Ababa was celebrated i.e 1986. When the government decided to celebrate the Centenary of Addis Ababa, it was also supposed to highlight the role of Emperor Menelik and Empress Taitu. In this connection, the Centenary committee of Addis Ababa vested the responsibility to produce a drama that would make the role of these figures more conspicuous.¹

Abāta recounts that he had heard that the city administration would name the former *Ras* Abāta Bridge after the Battle of Adwa. These two events encouraged him to peruse his work on “A March to the Battle of Adwa”.² This

film was staged concurrently with the opening of a new bridge named, “*Ya Adwa Matāsabiā Dildyī*”, in the area called *Awāre*. This bridge is believed to have been used by Emperor Menelik and his army when they marched to Adwa.³

The film, which is a 28 minutes length, narrates the way the various lords of the empire marched past before Emperor Menelik to the war front. The film shows the Ethiopian army from all corners: north, south, east and west. These soldiers were gathered at *Awāre*, where the film was displayed, before Emperor Menelik and Empress Taitu. Here, each army led by its warlord, equipped with traditional weapons such as spears, swords, shields and outdated guns and with traditional military discipline paraded before the Emperor. The various troops were displaying Abyssinian boasting, bragging and swearing to die to the motherland and to the Emperor. The Abyssinian boasting and bragging (*Fukarā* and *Shilalā*) were followed by the call of the Emperor to each leader of the army to march to the war front. Women are shown carrying provisions marched past before the Emperor. The whole event was also accompanied by clamors of domestic animals.⁴

The reenactment of the march to the Battle of Adwa required a huge mobilization, which was made possible by the help of high government officials. This film involved 4000 people, 400 horses, 150 mules, 200 donkeys, many sheep and goats, 200 priests 150 patriots and 100 *Azmaris*. Oral informants say that there was an attempt by some cadres to avoid the religious elements from the film: the decree of Emperor Menelik in which he mentioned the name of St. Mary.⁵

The clothes of Menelik, Taitu and the War Minister were brought from the National Museum and the participants were dressed in traditional clothes and locally made shoes. Abāta recounts that he researched and made use of historical sources mainly, Gabrasilāse' s *Tārika Zaman Dāgmāwī Atše Menelik*. He says that this work was a very significant contribution to the propaganda of the *Darg* to mobilize people. The fact that the film was repeatedly screened in the ETV, might have contributed towards the general mobilization that the *Darg* was undertaking.⁶

The celebrations of the Centenary of the Victory of Adwa also resulted in a production of a video documentary film on the Victory of Adwa by the IES. The IES, along with its academic conference and exhibition, produced this documentary film, which aimed at introducing the historical process that led to the Victory of Adwa. The production of the film employed various sources photographs, drawings and engravings etc.⁷

The film narrates the genesis of the Italian and Ethiopian relation, the serious developments that followed it and the confrontations that finally led to the Battle of Adwa. To give a broader African perspective, the film is enriched with historical narratives on the various layers of civilizations in different parts of Africa. The most humiliating event in the history of Africa, the Slave trade is also included.⁸

The film goes on to describe the history of the late 19th century Ethiopia and the subsequent Italian encroachment. The precursors of the Wuchale Treaty are properly placed. The major episodes in the history of the country of the 1880s and the 1890s that enabled the Italians to push

forward are described. Further more, the take over of Massawa by the Italians, the Dogali Incident, the Saati campaign against Italians by Emperor Yohannis IV in 1888, the death of Emperor Yohannis at Mettema in 1889 are succinctly included to give us the whole developments which led to the war.⁹

The signing of the Wuchale Treaty and the diplomatic efforts on the side of Italy to induce Emperor Menelik to accept the Wuchale Treaty, the annulment of the Treaty by the Emperor and Italian decision to use force constitute central part of the description.¹⁰

The film shows the immediate cause of the Battle of Adwa that is the rebellion of *Dajāzmāch* Bāhta Hagos of Eritrea who was supported by *Ras* Mangashā of Tigray. The entry of *Ras* Mangashā in the war against the Italians was exploited by Berateri to wage war against *Ras* Mangashā at *Koatit* in 1895. Upon his defeat, *Ras* Mangashā had to run away back to Tigray but Barateri pursued him and occupied many areas in Tigray. The event finally led to the glorious Victory of Adwa.¹¹

6.2 Music

Ethiopia has preserved its traditional songs to this day. These songs apart from their entertainment values were extremely useful to arouse patriotic spirit. At the Battle of Adwa a certain *Azmari* (Singer) by the name, *Fitawrari* Wibe is said to have accompanied Emperor Menelik to arouse the fighting spirit of the soldiers.¹²

On the eve of the Italian invasion, there was an attempt to organize the *Azmaris* to take part in the agitations and propagandas organized by *Ya*

Itiopia Hagar Fiqir Mahabar .¹³ Famous female singers like Nigātua Kalkāy are said to have sung to arouse people to fight for their country.¹⁴ It seems that since *Azmaris* tend to praise the glorious deeds of the past, on the eve of the Italian invasion, the *Azmaris* might have employed the memories of the Victory of Adwa to arouse the general public to fight against the enemy.¹⁵

According to oral informants, the tendency of traditional music performance during the imperial period was to praise the Emperor and his family. The *Fukarā and the Shlilalā* (Abyssinian boasting and bragging) especially were served to praise the Emperor. *Taqil* (the the Emperor’s horse name) was the opening and ending of any *Fukarā* and *Shlilalā* presented in a poem form. *Ato Getāchaw Dabälke* and *Ato Marhawī Sitot* recount that the Emperor was not willing to praise any other person other than himself and always wanted to aggrandize his place in history. As a result, others including Emperor Menelik and the heroes of Adwa were not mentioned in the *Fukarā and Shilalā*.¹⁶ Their comment seems right given the fact that the investigation made on the Voice Library of the Ethiopian Radio songs in relation to the theme under discussion are not available. One typical *Fukarā* I got from the Voice library of Ethiopian Radio goes as follows:

በለው ጃረ ጅበለው
ዘንባባ አንስቶ አላጌ ድረስ
አንድ አድርጎ ሸኘው በዳማ ፈረስ

አቤት አቤት ሲል በደም ያራጨው
ታማኝ ለጌታው ጎበኛ ዳጨው

ዳኘው ምኒሊክ ፍርዳን መርማሪ

በሃይማኖቱ አገሩን አኩሪ ¹⁷

Lama Gabrahiwot remembers in the above song the heroic deeds of Emperor Menelik and Gobana Dachew.

The post-1974 period can be regarded as a time when more music of nationalistic in content prevailed in Ethiopian music. As was said many times in this thesis the *Darg* used the arts to serve as an agent of political education and as a tool to create political consciousness of the Ethiopian people. Hence, songs that had national messages were encouraged.¹⁸ The *Darg* even proclaimed a decree that unless at least one pro-government(nationalistic) song was included in each album that would be released, it was banned from publication and marketing. It was also true in the Theatres that only 15% of their entertainment programmes had to deal with non-political themes.¹⁹

The large collections of songs produced during this period dealt with the values of independence, freedom, sovereignty and the role of forefathers in keeping the nation's sovereignty. The songs referred to the deeds of forerunners in general not specific to the Victory of Adwa. No single song is available that was sung for the memory of the Victory of Adwa. Nodoubt, however, that whenever they sang they indirectly alluded to the Victory of Adwa. These types of songs are found in abundant but have no significance for the theme of the thesis and are therefore not included. To cite two songs of such themes:

ብዙ ሺህ ዘመናት ተከብረሽ የኖርሽው /2/
 በጀግኖች አባቶች አጥንት የታጠርሽው /2/
 በእኛም ውስጥ አለ የአባቶች ጀግንነት /2/
 ፍፁም አይናጋም የኢትዮጵያ አንድነት
 ብዙ አባቶች ሞተው ብዙ አናቶች ቀብረን
 ነው ሀገር የቆመችው በደም አስከብረው
 ዛሬም እኛ እንሙት ለመድገም ታሪክን
 ተከብራ እንድትኖር አትዮጵያ አገራችን²⁰

Here, the singer Tāmrat Molā tries to address the resounding victories of our forefathers to stimulate the people to repeat the same victory against aggressors to keep the sovereignty of Ethiopia. The song was released at the apex of the Somalian aggression in 1977; this is a clear point where by music served a national cause. Another song by Mahāmmud Ahmad similarly says that the Ethiopian people would fight to save their country from any invasion.

ግን ሀገራችንን ክፍ የሚያስባትን
 ቆራጥ ነን ልጆችዋ አንወድም ጥቃትን
 ተከብረሽ የኖርሽው በአባቶቻችን ደም
 እናት ኢትዮጵያ የደፈረሽ ይውደም.²¹

The above song conveys that this generation would safeguard the sovereignty of its nation, which was handed down to it by the sacrifices paid by the forefathers.

Although there might have been songs in which memories of the Victory were heralded in the Hagar Fiqr and National Theatres the absence

of proper archives has not enabled me to substantiate the discussion. As pointed out earlier, even in the well-organized library of the Ethiopian Radio, I found only the following song of Rāhel Yohannis and Tashoma Asagid:

የጀግኖቹ አፅም ከማር ይጣፍጣል /2/
መቅደላ መተማ የማይጨው የአድዋ የመተማ ሜዳ
ተዳኘበት አንጂ መች ዳኘበት ባዳ
አሞዬ ምኒሊክ ዘርአይ የኔ አንበሳ
በህልም ታዋጋለህ በአካል ባትንሣ
አባት ያቆየውን ልጅም አያፈርሰው
ቤት ፈረሰ ተብሎ ሲተረክ ሲወራ
ባልቻ ተወለደ ዳግም ፍሬ አፈራ ²²

Here, the singers mention the various battlefields in which Ethiopians scored victories against their enemies. They also state Ethiopia’s heroes especially Emperor Menelik who was the leader of the battle and Balcha, one of the heroes of the Ethiopian army at the Battle of Adwa. In the post-1991 period, up to at least the end of the period of the study, I have not come across a song in relation to the theme.

6.3 Paintings, Graphics and Sculptures

Paintings on the Battle of Adwa were among the most common secular themes favored by popular artists. Paintings of the Battle of Adwa started to be drawn following the glorious Victory of Ethiopia against Italy in 1896. Pankhrust identifies that the first painting on the Battle of Adwa was the

painting found at the church of St. Mary in Leqempt. It is also believed that a number of works of this theme must have been done a few years after the battle.²³ Travelers of the early 20th century mentioned the works of Ethiopian artists on the Battle of Adwa. Gilochen visited the painting in the Cathedral of St. George in Addis Ababa drawn by *Alaqā* Hiruy of Dima Giorgis in Gojjam. This painting was destroyed when the Italians attacked the church and burnt its paintings in February 1937.²⁴

These early paintings on Adwa though followed a traditional convention, showed significant change throughout the twentieth century. The earlier works of paintings of the Menelik era have a tendency to depict the two opposing armies separated by “no man’s land”. The Ethiopians according to the tradition of painting were placed on the left in full face where as the enemy, on the right in profile. This trend also continued in the 1920’s and 1930’s with some changes.²⁵

During the two decades of the 1920’s and the 1930’s, changes were shown in style of the works of popular painters. These changes were that primarily, the intervening space that was rectangular was replaced by a pyramid-shaped that would show more hand-to-hand combat. Secondly, while Empress Taitu, the consort of the Emperor was removed, *Ras* Makonnin who had not been prominently placed in the earlier paintings acquired significant placing in the pictures. This had to do with political changes.²⁶

Furthermore, there were other changes appeared in the works of this period: the increasing prominence given to St. George, and the national flag,

the inclusion of machine guns unknown to the earlier painters, the inclusion of priests carrying arks, men beating drums, women carrying jars of water, castration of the enemy, and representation of enemy soldiers in uniforms.²⁷

In the post-liberation paintings, the old tradition of representing the Ethiopians in full face and their enemies in profile could not be strictly followed. This was the exposure of some artists to the outside world, which also influenced their works. Moreover, paintings of this time portrayed Emperor Menelik more as a commander watching and supervising events from above as opposed to the earlier paintings where he was part of the battle.²⁸

This was due to two factors. First, changes in the practice of warfare and the new system of monarchy developed by the Emperor. Second, the paintings began also to include non Shawa military leaders like Nigus Taklahaimānot of Gojjam and *Ras* Mangashā of Tigray. This was due to the increasing awareness of the Ethiopian state to include these figures in the total attempt of reconstructing collective identity. Third, *Ras* Makonnin got pictorial prominence due to the political importance of his son, Emperor Hailesselasie.²⁹

It seems that traditional paintings on Adwa had captured the attention of scholars. Therefore, I have opted for focusing on modern art. Modern art here means works produced by artists who acquired modern training in the arts of painting, graphics and sculpture. In fact, I could only use the works of graduate students of the Fine Arts School at the Addis Ababa University and the works of two professional artists. Though there are paintings of

historical themes quite in a large number in the School of Fine Arts, I got three paintings, one graphics and one sculptor work of a student pertinent to my research. I also visited some galleries in Addis, hoping that I would be able to get sources but I found none. Nevertheless, oral informants indicate that there were works of artists, which were either sold to foreigners or kept afar from public knowledge.³⁰

Since the establishment of the School of Fine Arts in 1951, students produced various works of historical nature on their graduation.³¹ Among the first diploma graduates who did a painting on the Battle of Adwa was Warku Māmo in 1954 EC. This work is not available in the Arts School and it is not also in the possession of Warku and is therefore difficult to discuss it for this purpose.³²

All the three paintings I got depict the battle between Ethiopians and Italians. Ethiopian figures are shown armed with traditional weapons such as spears, swords, and their adversaries, the Italians with modern ammunitions. Ethiopians are shown dressed in traditional clothes *Ya Adwa kind* by Fissaha Isaāias portraying Ethiopians in half-naked and the Italians in uniform. The Ethiopian cavalry are armed with firearms whereas the infantry are armed with shields and spears. This appears to tell us that the cavalry of the Ethiopian side represents the leaders of the wars and the large numbers of the infantry are the ordinary soldiers.³³

In Afawark Mangashā's *Ya Adwa Dil* the commander of the Ethiopian army is seated on caparisoned horse attired by traditional dress is shown throwing his a spear against an Italian soldier. In Yosef Abāte's painting, *Ya*

Adwa Tornat 1996, the Italians are shown retreating and leaving behind their dead, wounded as well as equipment whereas the Ethiopian army led by their military leaders are depicted pursuing the enemy.³⁴ The Victory of Ethiopians at Adwa was accompanied by booties that the Italians had left behind. His painting attempts to represent what defeat brought about to the Italians.

Fissaha Isaias in his painting shows hand-to-hand combating between the two armies. Both parties fight in sheer heroism. It is depicted that not only are people killed from both parties but horses are also fallen down during the fight. The artists show in their paintings using their own imaginations the topography of Adwa where the war was fought.³⁵

Two professional artists who did works on the Battle of Adwa are Waku Mamo and Eshatu Tirunah. Both works are different in terms of the content they demonstrated. These works do not show the act of fighting between the two parties. However, they narrate its history, the way they perceive it. Warku Mamo displayed his work in an exhibition privately organized in 1995 and Eshatu had exhibited his work for the Centenary celebrations of the Victory of Adwa.

Warku Mamo's works (two paintings), which is entitled "the Campaign for the Battle of Adwa" shows the assembly of leaders in two groups and the infantry behind them. In the first painting, no armament is shown carried by the soldiers. All are dressed traditional clothes and with black over coats. The painting shows the topography in which he says, fear reigned to show a war atmosphere. The second of his work also depicts converged warriors

with spears and shields attired with traditional dress. Warku discloses that he does not like to show blood and war in his paintings.³⁶

Eshatu's work is entitled "Magnanimity of the Victor". This work, which is found in the National Museum, depicts Emperor Menelik seated on a caparisoned horse returned the ceremonial sword he had taken from the deceased Italian General Dabormeda, to General Armondi. Eshatu says that this act symbolizes that a victor should show clemency, exactly what Emperor Menelik had done to the Italians many times, at Makale siege, the humane treatment of their prisoners of war as well as their peaceful release of the war captives to their country after the war. The sword symbolizes power and glory, heroism and honor, and values shown at Adwa by Menelik. Simultaneously, it also symbolizes that the Emperor was restoring the dignity of the defeated enemy.³⁷

The only graphic art drawn by a female artist Hirut Alamāyahu in 1982 (E.C) entitled "*Ya Itiopia Şahay*" shows Empress Taitu, the consort of the Emperor. This art depicts Empress Taitu in the middle of the fighters seated on caparison horse attired with beautiful dress. The art intends to show the Empress's involvement in the battle. A number of attendants escort her on both sides. Here the infantry is armed with spears and shields except one of them are depicted holding a gun. There is a flag most likely the Ethiopian flag carried by one of the soldiers. The soldiers are lined up to rush to the final showdown.³⁸

With regard to sculptor, oral informants told me that only two works were done in connection with the subject of the study. One is a production of

Tādassa Māmechā, in 1954 (E.C) which is found in the compound of the School of Fine Arts and the second work was produced in the occasion of the commemoration of the centenary of Adwa in 1996.³⁹

In a 10x4 m wall, Tāddassa depicts the relief of the Battle of Adwa, although without caption, oral informants unanimously agree that this work was originally made to demonstrate the Battle of Adwa. The sculptor shows an Ethiopian seated on a horse threw a spear against an Italian. The Ethiopians are shown on the left and the Italian on the right side. The Italians are in uniform armed with firearms and one of their compatriots laying on the ground. This work shows the topography of the battlefield where Ethiopians are depicted pushing against the Italians. It seems that one of the Ethiopian soldiers give a sign to the other Ethiopian soldiers to advance forth.⁴⁰

The second work of sculptors was done for the Centenary of the Victory of Adwa. The works depict the heroes of Adwa: Emperor Menelik, Empress Taitu, Bālchā Abā Nafso, *Ras* Makonnin, *Ras* Mangashā, *Ras* Alulā, *Nigus* Taklahaimānot, *Nigus* Michāel, *Ras* Wolle Bitul, women carrying provisions, peasants, members of the Russian Red Cross society, a priest, a Muslim, a peasant from southern Ethiopia. On the part of Italians, the four generals who took part at the battle of Adwa were represented.⁴¹

These were the works of four sculptors: Tādassa Balāynah, Girmā Kidāne, Bakala Makonnin and Muze Awal. The attempt *Ato* Bakala Makonnin says was to show a panoramic view that every nations and nationalities of the country participated in the battle.⁴² This was a clear

attempt to write a history that all the people of the country and from all faiths took part at the Battle of Adwa.

Moreover, the battlefield of Adwa was represented: the mountains of *Endaba Garima* and other mountains. *Ato Bakala* says that the government brought aerial photograph of the topography of Adwa, which greatly helped their works. In each mountain it is also located the deployment of the Ethiopian army.⁴³ An art critic, however, declines that these works are improper and cannot be considered as sculptures.⁴⁴

Conclusion

National Commemoration and memories of glorious past of a given nation have played significant role in shaping national identity in many parts of the world. In Africa, where colonialism resulted in the formation of new states, each of the newly born countries tried to build a distinct national identity in order to prevent disintegration. This was made possible partly by retaining a collective past that would epitomize the unity of a given people.

As opposed to many of the African countries, Ethiopia is not a creation of Europeans. The country has existed over a long period in spite of repeated invasions from external powers. The Victory of Adwa, which rescued the country from European colonialism, among many wars the country fought, was fought by almost all the peoples of Ethiopia. This unique Victory has been, therefore, the most celebrated and glorified part of the history of the country.

This resounding Victory acquired a strong religious interpretation especial from the early times up to the Revolution. Emperor Menelik began the celebration of the Victory Day to pay homage to Saint George who was considered to have assisted the Ethiopians at the Battle of Adwa. Nevertheless, political implications of the celebration were also conspicuous when the magnificent parade was displayed before foreign representatives, which Emperor Menelik used it as a forum to display the military potential of his country to neighbouring colonialist countries.

The commemoration and memories of Adwa fostered strong sense of patriotism and heroism at times the country encountered invasion from external forces throughout the twenty century. The memory people had, regarding the Victory of Adwa, was instrumental on the eve of the Italian invasion and during the resistance war in arousing many people to fight against the Italians.

Adwa's memories were also employed to reconstruct the symbols of the state in the aftermath of the liberation. The Emperor, by renovating the statue of Emperor Menelik II, put himself in the line of national continuity

and declared symbolically the defeat of the Italians. Emperor Haileselassie also employed to strengthen his throne by overplaying the role of his father. During the regime of the Emperor, the fame of his father, *Ras Makonnin*, was glorified as a man who brought Victory to Ethiopia at the Battle of Adwa. Nevertheless, with the passage of time the Emperor subtly avoided praising Adwa and its memories to evade the contempt that could have come to his regime by praising Adwa.

The new ideology introduced by the *Darg*, resulted in a total departure in the commemoration and the meanings given to the Victory of Adwa. The divorce of the state and religion had a direct ramification in this regard. The religious symbolism of the Victory was abandoned (at least from the state point of view) and secular interpretations of the Victory were given and overplayed. The commemorations of Adwa Day began to take place outside the Cathedral of St. George, at Menelik II Square and Revolution Square.

The *Darg* , by colorfully celebrating the Victory of Adwa and by activating and reinvigorating the memory of the Victory, tried to undermine the old regime, got its ideology and policy delivered and mobilized the people against the tide of external invasion and internal oppositions.

With the demise of the *Darg*, the political philosophy of the ruling regime brought about change in the commemoration as well as in the interpretations of the Victory of Adwa. EPRDF did not seem to take notice of the values of national symbols like the Victory Day of Adwa. In the first three or four years, after it took power narratives of the Victory were not published in the newspapers and its memories were not told in the government media.

Moreover, unlike the earlier regimes, when the commemoration was presided over by higher officials, the top leaders of the EPRDF showed their ambivalence by not presiding over the celebrations.

The Centenary celebrations in particular showed vividly the ambivalence of the government. The government handed over the responsibility of celebrating the Grand National Centenary to a third party and allotted a very insignificant amount of money to its celebrations. The opposition, on the other hand, took an extreme stand rejecting the Centenary celebrations at Adwa where Ethiopians got the resounding victory in 1896. The controversy between the government and the opposition made the Centenary celebrations highly politicized.

It is understood from the discussion of the thesis that the meanings and commemorations of the Victory of Adwa were maneuvered in line with the political philosophy of each of these governments. The memories and commemoration were revived and reinvigorated at times when the unity of the country was challenged, became dormant when peace and order was established and were vulnerable to manipulation for a destined political objective. In spite of this, however, Adwa was a useful past that the three regimes invariably used to mobilize the Ethiopian people against enemies and to inculcate their policies.

Chapter One

End Notes

1. I have understood this from the discussions I had with *Ato Shiferaw* and from the books, Dr. Takalign gave me. I would like to thank both of them in helping me understand the concepts.
2. For this discussion I made use of an article *Ato Shifarāw* gave me, an article I got from the internate and two books I got from the Kennedy Library.
3. The Paul Connerton , How societies remember, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press ,1989, p.1.
4. Grace Yueh- Ying Chen, “Social Change and Collective Memory: Taiwan’s Two Pasts”,p. 6. I got from the internate.
www.international.ucla.edu/cira/paper/TW__Grace__Chen.pdf
5. Ibid ;p. 7
6. Ibid.
7. Paul Connerton, pp.16-17
8. Ibid , p. 4

- 9.F.R. Ankersmit, "Commemoration and National Identity." Groningen University, p. 3 . Ato Shifarāw told me that he got the document from a German Historian.
- 10.Paul Connerton, p. 44; 61
- 11.F.R. Ankersmit, p. 15
12. Richard M. Dorson(ed), Folklore and Folk life. An Introduction, (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1972),pp.163-170

Chapter Two

End Notes

1. Bahru Zawde, A Modern History of Ethiopia ,(London : James Curry Press ,1991),p.51.
2. Stephen H.Longrigg, A Short History of Eritrea, Oxford :Clarendon Press,1945,p.113; 3.Bahru, p.57 :and Haggai Erlich, Ras Alula and the Scramble for Africa, (Asmara: Red Sea Press),1996,p. 113.
- 4.Richard Caulk, "Between the Jaws of Hyenas." A Diplomatic History of Ethiopia(1875-1896), (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Veriag,2002), p.147.
5. Sven Rubenson, Wichale XVII :The Attempt to Establish a Protectorate Over Ethiopia, (Addis Ababa : Artistic Printing Press,1964), p.11.
6. Ibid, pp12-13.
7. Ibid.
8. Bahru, p.76.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid, p.77.

11. Ibid.
12. Harold Marcus, A History of Ethiopia, (Berkley: University of California, 1994), p. 99.
13. Ibid, p.100.
14. Ibid ; Bahru ,pp 81-82.
15. Ibid p, 84.
16. Gabrasillāse Walda Aragāy, Tārika Za Dāgmāwi Menelik Nigusa Nagast Za Itiopia, (Addis Ababa: Artistic Printing Press, 1959E.C), pp.268-270 and Tājeba Bayana, Addis Ababa Tināgar, (Addis Abeba: Artistic Printing Press, 1968 E.C), p.34.
17. Ibid.
18. Marse Hazan Waldaqīrqos and Kabbada Dastā simply write in their accounts that the Victory of Adwa Day was celebrated starting from the first anniversary but they do not tell us how and where it was celebrated.
19. It was primarily difficult to explain why the 7th year was lavishly commemorated. But Professor Richard Pankhrust and *Ato* Shifarāw Bakala argue that *Tezkar* was the basic reason why Menelik celebrated Adwa's 7th year Anniversary.
20. Gabrasillāse ,pp.304-306.
21. Ibid ; p.308-312 ; Harold Marcus, The Life and Times of Menelik II of Ethiopia 1844-1913, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975,) pp.217-218.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Hailegebreil Dagne , “The Establishment of Churches in Addis Ababa” in Ahmed Zekaria, Bahru Zewde and Taddese Beyene(eds.) Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Centenary of Addis Ababa, (Addis Ababa : IES, 1987), p 65.
25. Biniam Zeray, “The History of St. George Church from Its Foundation up to 1974” (BA Thesis, AAU, Department of History, 1983), p.4.: An oral informant, *Magābi* Tirunah Haylamāriam says that the proclamation of Emperor Menelik added one more day (Yakātīt 23) other than Tir 18 and Miyāzyiā 23rd that the ark of St. George would be celebrated.

26. Biniam, p.5.
27. Ibid. ; Hailegebrel Dagne ,p.65 ; The Genete Tsegie St. George's Church. A Historical Journey of a Century. January 9, 1996. The architect of the building was a Greek by the name of Orphanides and it was erected by an Italian Engineer called Muse Castagna. A steamroller imported from Europe supported the construction of the Church. Foreigners, Greeks and Armenians as well as Ethiopians were involved in the construction.
28. Alfred E. Pease Travel and Sport in Africa Vol. III ,(London : Arthure L.Humphreys Piccadillyw,1902),p.187.
29. Ya Itiopia Nigusa Nagasit Mangist Ya Betamangist. Sandakāalāmāwoch. A Manuscript available in the IES.
30. Harold Marcus, Emperor Haile Sellasie I :The Formative Years(1892-1936), (Berkley:University of California,1987),p.20.
31. Birhaninā Salām Vol. 1, No.10, Yakātit 26, 1917; Vol.2 No.9, Yakātit 25, 1918; Vol3. No.9, Yakātiit 24, 1919; Vol. 4 No, Yakātit 10, 1920 ; Vol. 5 No. 10, Yakātit 28, 1921 and Vol. 6 No. 10. Yakātit 26, 1922
32. Echege was the highest religious title in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Birhaninaā Salām Vol.1 No. 10, Yakātit 26, 1917.
36. Aimiro Vol. 9 No.23, Yakātit 25, 1916
37. Birhaninā Salām Vol. 5 No.10, Yakātit 28, 1921
38. Catherine Murrey Jacoby, On Special Mission to Abyssinia (Newyork: Argus Graphic Art Service, 1933),pp.48-51 and Fikru Ayalew, “Survey of Monuments And Statutes in Addis Ababa (1929-1984)”, (BA. Thesis, A.A.U Department of History, 1999), P.41.
39. Ibid.
40. Amare Dawit and Fassil Ghiorgis, “Early Architectural Development in Addis Ababa” in Ahmed Zekaria, Bahru Zewde and Taddese Beyene(eds.) Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Centenary of Addis Ababa, (Addis Ababa : IES,1987),p174.
41. Catherine, p. 51

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. This is true when one looks at the publications of both *Birhaninā Salām* and *Aimiro* before the Emperor's speech.

46. Oral informant, *Magabi Sibhat* Tirunah Haylamāriām. He says that in the tradition of the EOC prayer and praise should be made for a n Emperor. As a result when the name of Emperor Menelik was mentioned equally the name of Emperor Hailesselase was also included in the hymn.

47. *Birhanina Salām* Vol.8 No. 104, Yakātīt 25, 1924

48. Harold Marcus, Emperor Haile Sellasie I :The Formative Years(1892-1936), p.161.

49. Ibid.

50. The publications after July 1935 disclosed many issues to the point I have written.

51. *Birhaninā Salām* Vol. 11 No.46, Yakātīt 27, 1928

52. Bahru Zawde, Pioneers of Change in Ethiopia,(Oxford : James Currey,2002),p.202 ; Kiros Gebrezegabher, “The Origin and Historical Development of Hagar Fikir Theatre up to 1974”,(BA Thesis AAAU, Department of History,1983),pp.2-5.

53. Hagar Fiqir Thīatr Hamsāña Amat, Vol. 3 No. 3 1978,p.29.

54. I have roughly translated the poems with the help of my friend, Tāddassa Jālatā who is a third year postgraduate student in Literature.

Let me collect their bones digging the grave
Gobana from Shewa Alulā from Tigre
I have been dreaming since yesterday
Alulā for bullet and Gobanā for trapping
All came together and swore allegiance
Alulā from Tigray and Gobanā from Gala
Gobanā to train his daughter horse riding
And Alulā to train his daughter firing bullet
To expand education and to strengthen unity

Let the four councilors
Makonnin, Darso, Alulā, Gobanā
Let our country get relieved.

Mulugetā Siyum, “Ya Ato Yoftāhe Niguse Ya Hiwat Tārik”, (BA Thesis AAU, Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature , 1964),p. 48.

55. Menelik why you kept silent while I am encircled by foxes

Let they (the enemy) not bark at me
Do not bark (the enemy) do not disturb others
Menelik no one challenges the enemy except you
On Adwa when the Italians sang
Your’s (Menelik’s) sword slaughtered the enemy
It was terrifying as you saw at Alage
This Makonnin is a strong farmer*.

*Here farmer means fighter.

Agañahu Ingidā, Sila Itiopia Ya tagaṭama ,(Addis Ababa: Betasāyda Printing Press, 1928 E.C) ,pp 26-27.

56. Wake up Ethiopia, sharpen, your spears

Wake up Ethiopia clean your shield
Get well equipped demonstrate your bravery
Even if you are named as a female, you are not female
How did he forget it (its defeat) in these forty years?

Ibid.

57. Let my great sons not laugh at you

They are with us they are not dead
I have been worried when I think about them
Let me mention them turn by tern

Ibid.

58. Menelik, call upon Taitu as quickly as possible

If she can support me
Your body (Taytu’s) made me warmed
I wonder how you have been warmed at Adwa.

Ibid.

59. Bahru Zewde, Pioneers of Change, p.202
60. Let us remember the history
 Though the evil men disturb the country by doing evil
 The patient King Dāgñaw Menelik
 He faced them (the enemy) bravely without bowing down
 To let the despised surrender the despising.
- Waldagiorgis Waldayohanis, Jagnā Saw Tagādāy La Ṭalātu Almotim Bāy,
 (Addis Ababa: Betasāydā Printing Press, 1928 E.C),p.12
61. Teclehaimanot Gebresselasie , “ A Brief Survey of The Azmaris in Addis Ababa” Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Centenary of Addis Ababa, (Addis Ababa : IES,1987),p 166.
62. Hagar Fiqir,p 29.
63. *Birhaninā Salām* Vol.11 No.46, Yakātīt 27, 1928.
64. *Aimiro* Vol.13 No.40, Yakātīt 28, 1928.
65. Alberto Sbacci, Legacy of Bitternace: Ethiopia and Fascist Italy,1935-1941, (Lawrenceville,Nj : The Red Sea Press,1997)p.xxvii.
66. Masfin Malasa.Gaşa Adwa Ba Gitim Wist, Adwa Centenary Conference Papers February 26-2 March, (Addis Ababa, Institute of Ethiopian Studies,1996,Vol II),p 21.
67. Harold Marcus ,Emperor Haile Selasie I : The Formative Years ,p167
68. Richard Pankhrust,“Ethiopia and the Loot of Italian Invasion.” Presence Africane, Vol.4 No72, 1969, p.2.
69. Biniam Zeray,p. 6 and Richard Pankhrust ,Ethiopia and the Loot of Italian Invasion,p.2.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid;p.3.
72. Ibid; Similarly, the Italians demolished the statue of the Lion of Judah which had been put up by the French who were close to Emperor Menelik II. The side of the pedestal were engraved, the effigies of Menelik, Zawditu, Makonnin and Haileselassie I. After demolishing it, the Italians shipped it away to Rome where it was erected for the memory of the 500 Italian soldiers

who had been killed at the Battle of Dogali and *Addis Zaman* Vol. 1 No. 2, Miyāziyā 1934.

73. Richard Pankhurst, p.4.

74. Ibid; p.5.

75. Biniam Zeray, p.15.

76. Hailegebrel Daghe, p.74.

77. Biniam Zeray, p.16.

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid.

Chapter Three

End Notes

1. Christopher Clapham, Haillesselasié's Government. (New York: Praeger, 1969), p.21.

2. *Nagārit Gāzetā* 1941 Vol. 1 No.1.

3. *Sandāk Alamāchin* Vol. 2 No.1, Miyāziyā 1934.

4. Ibid.

5. Bahru Zewde , A Modern History of Ethiopia, pp.163-164.

6. Getāchaw Zagaya, “Ya Addis Ababa Mangadoch nā Siyāmewochāchaw”, (BA Thesis, AAU Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature, 1980),p.8.

7. See the publication of *Addis Zaman* and *Ethiopian Herald* close to the days of the celebrations of the Adwa Day.

8. In my discussion with my informants *Ato Adāmu*, *Ato Getāchaw* and *Ato Marāwi* all commented that the Emperor was unhappy to praise Adwa.

9. See the publications of *Addis Zaman* and the *Ethiopian Herald* close to the celebrations of the Victory of Adwa Day.

10. Ibid

11 Ibid.

12. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 15 No. 120 Yakātīt 23, 1948

13. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 30 No. 351 Yakātīt 23, 1963

14. Especially in the 1950's and 1960's due to the policy of the regime to bring economic development, it attempted to raise the people together to achieve this goal.

15. Tefera Hailesselasie, The Ethiopian Revolution 1974-1991 From Monarchical Autocracy To a Military Oligarchy, (London: Kegan Paul International, 1997), p 127.

16. Christopher Clapham Transformation and Continuity in Revolutionary Ethiopia, (Cambridge :Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 19

17. Getāchaw Zagaya, p.8.

18. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 36 No. 870, Maskaram 1, 1968.

19. Christopher, Transformation and Contunity, p. 19.

20. Eyayu Lulseged, “Why do the Orthodox Christians in Ethiopia Identify Their Faith with Their Nations?” in Richard Pankhrust , Ahmed Zekaria and Taddess Beyene Proceedings of the First National Conference of Ethiopian Studies, (Addis Ababa April 11-12 1990), p.5.

21. Oral informant, *Magābi Sibhat* Tirunah Haylamāriam told me that the *Darg* did not intervene in the activities of the celebrations of Adwa Day, in

fact the name of Emperor Haileselesie was mentioned in memorial prayers along with others during this day.

22. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 36 No, Yakātīt 24, 1967 Vol.37 No. 949, Yakātīt 27 1968 ; Vol. 32 No. 1251, Yakātīt 23 1969 ; Vol. 34 No. 1558, Yakātīt 25,1970; Vol. 36 No. 144, Yakātīt 23,1971; Vol. 38 No. 135, Yakātīt 24 1972 and *Ethiopian Herald* Vol.XXX No. 1276, 4 March 1975; Vol. XXXIV No. 524, March 1976; Vol. XXXIV No 355, 4 March 1977; Vol XXXIII No. 355 , March 4 1978; Vol. XXXV No.322, 4 March 1979 and 4 March 1980 , Vol. XXXIV No. 145, 4 March 1980.

23.Ibid.

24.Dawit Weldegiorgis, Red Tears: War , Famine and Revolutionin Ethiopia,(New Jersey: Red Sea ,1989)p. 66-67. He writes that the Darg copied many new things from the East, there is no doubt that was one of the imported elements from the Socialist Countries.

25.*Addis Zaman* Vol. 36 No, Yakātīt 24, 1967 and *Ethiopian Herald* Vol.XXX No. 1276, 4 March 1975.

26.Ibid.

27.Ibid.

28. Oral informant, *Ato Alamu Gabrāab*.

29.*Addis Zaman* Vol.37 No. 949, Yakātīt 27 1968 and *Ethiopian Herald* 4 March 1976. Vol. XXXIV No. 52, 4 March 1976.

30.Ibid.

31.Ibid.

32.*Addis Zaman* Vol. 32 No. 1251, Yakātīt 23, 1969 and *Ethiopian Herald* Vol. XXXIV No 355, 4 March 1977

33.*Addis Zaman* Vol. 34 No. 1558, Yakātīt 25,1970 ; Vol. 36 No. 144, Yakātīt 23,1971 and *Ethiopian Herald* Vol . XXXIV No. 763 4 March 1978 and Vol.XXXV No. 143, 4 March 1979.

34. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 38 No. 135, Yakātīt 24, 1972 and *Ethiopian Herald* Vol. XXXIV No. 145, 4 March 1980.

35.Ibid.

36. See the publications *Addis Zaman* and *Ethiopian Herald* close to Adwa Day and Bakala Tashoma, “Ba Itiopia Ya Abyot Hidat Ya Amarinā Mafakroch Malektnā Ya Aṣṣāf Silt, (BA Thesis AAU, Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature, 1979),pp 12-13.
37. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 37 No. 949, Yakātīt 27, 1968 and *Ethiopian Herald* Vol. XXXIV No.52, 4 March 1976.
38. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 32 No, 1251, Yakātīt 23, 1969 and *Ethiopian Herald* Vol. XXXIV No 355, 4 March 1977.
39. Ibid.
40. *Addis Zaman* Vol.34. No.1558, Yakātīt 25, 1970 and *Ethiopian Herald* Vol. XXXIV No.763 4 March 1978.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 34 No. 1558, Yakātīt 25,1970 and *Ethiopian Herald* Vol.XXXV No. 143, 4 March 1979
44. *Addis Zaman* Vol.38 No.135, Yakātīt 24, 1972 and *Ethiopian Herald* Vol. XXXIV No. 145, 4 March 1980.
45. *Addis Zaman* Vol.39 No. 146 Yakātīt 24, 1973 ; Vol. 40 No.136, Yakātīt 25, 1974.
46. Ibid.
47. Tafera Hailesselasie,p. 241.
48. Oral informant, *Ato Zawde Taklu*.
49. See *Addis Zaman* and *Ethiopian Herald* publications related to the commemorations of the victory of Adwa through out these years.
50. Oral informant, *Ato Adamu Asagāhañ*
51. Tafera Hailesselasie,p.218.
52. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 41 No. 141, Yakātīt 22, 1975.
53. Tafera Hailesselasie,p. 218.
54. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 42 No. 145, Yakātīt 23, 1976 and Vol. 44 No. 145, Yakātīt 23, 1977.
55. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 48 No.1154, Yakātīt 23, 1981 ; Vol. 49 No.246, Yakātīt 23, 1982 and Vol.50 No.138, Yakātīt 23, 1983.

56.Ibid.

Chapter Four

End Notes

1. *Tārikin Gamgāmn Wayāne* Itiopia, TPLF, 1977, p.1. No place of publication. I found this book in the Library of Voice of the Revolutionary People of Tigray, Makele.
2. Ibid; pp.6-9.
3. John Young, Peasant Revolution in Ethiopia: The Tigray People Liberation Front(1975- 1991), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.46.
4. Ibid; p.89.
5. This was a time when various ideas were published in the private newspapers.
6. Tim Carmichael, “Approaching Ethiopian History :Addis Ababa And Local Governance in Harar,(c. 1900-1950)”, (PhD Thesis in History, Michigan State University, 2001), pp.4-9.
7. Oral informant, Dr. Nagasso Gidada.
8. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 50 No. 174, Hidār 30 ,1984.

9. Ibid ; Oral informant, Dr, Nagasso Gidada.
10. Oral informant, Dr. Nagasso Gidada.
11. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 50 No. 218, Tähsās 2 ,1984.
12. Oral Informant, *Mamhir Ezrā* Mulunah.
13. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 50 No. 192, Tähsās ,15 1984. A report on the Counter Demonstration regarding the statue of Menelik broadcast by ETV on December 22, 1991.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Oral informant. Dr. Nagāssō Gīdādā.
18. Ibid.
19. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 56 No.253, Yakātīt 24, 1984.
20. Ibid.
21. Oral Informant *Ato Adāmu Asagāhañ* says that the statement of the then president, *Ato Meles Zenawi* as regards the flag has been one of the many issues oppositions attack the then President.
22. Oral informant, Dr. Nagasso Gidada.
23. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 52 No.490, Yakātīt 25, 1985 ; Vol. 54 No. 1036, Yakātīt 25, 1986 and Vol. 55 No. 454 , Yakātīt 25, 1987.
24. Ibid.
25. *Addis Zaman* Vol . 54 No. 1036 Yakātīt 25, 1985.
26. *Tobia* Vol.2 No.14, Sane 8, 1987.
27. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 55 No. 45 , Sane 15, 1987.
28. Oral Informant, Professor Andreas Eshete.
29. National Committee, Commemoration of the Centennial of the Battle of Adwa. A document I got in the archive of Tigray Development Association.
30. Oral informant, Professor Andreas Eshete; *Reporter* Vol. 1 No. 23, Yakātīt 4, 1988
31. Ibid.
32. A document that deals with the performance and activities the Tigray Regional Committee. It does not have a title and is available in the archives

of T.D.A. In my discussion with Dr. Solomon Inqui and *Ato Mollā Tadrā* I was informed that the sole reason why T.D.A. was given the mandate was to run the activities with its resources and rich experience.

These subcommittees were: a site development subcommittee, documentation and records, publications subcommittee, promotion subcommittee, culture subcommittee, site tour subcommittee and logistics subcommittees.

33. *Tobiā* Vol.2 No.31, Sane 29 , 1987

34. The publication of *Andnat* especially since the activities of the celebration started, a number of issues came out regarding the point under discussion.

35. Oral informant, *Ato Sāhle Assafā*.

36. *Andnat* Vol.2 No. 18, Hidār 29, 1987.

37. Ibid Vol. 2 No. 31 Sane 29, 1987.

38. Ibid Vol. 2 No. 22, Tir 25, 1988 .

39. Ibid; *Tomār* Vol. 3 No. 28, Yakātīt 7, 1988 and *Tobiā* Vol. 3 No.11, Yakātīt 7, 1988.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid Vol. 2 No.23, Yakātīt 9, 1988.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid Vol.2 NO. 24, Yakātīt 23, 1988 ; *Tomār* Vol. 3 No. 30, Yakātīt 20 , 1988 and *Tobiā* Vol. 3 No. 12 Yakātīt 14, 1988.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid; *Tomār* Vol 3 No. 30, Yakātīt 20, 1988.

47. *Abyotawi Democracy* Vol.6 No.149, Yakātīt 14 -20, 1988 .

48. Ibid.

49. *Wayin* Vol. 21 No. 884, Magābit 1988 and Ibid.

50. A document that deals with the; Oral Informant *Ato Mollā Tadrā*.

51. Oral informants , Professor Bahru Zewde ; Professor Andreas Eshate and *Ato Tafari Wassan*.

52. Oral Informant, *Ato Mollā Tadrā* and A document that deals with....

53. Oral informant, Professor Bahru Zewde.
54. Oral informant, Professor Andreas Eshete and *Ato Tafari Wasan*.
55. Ibid.
56. A document that deals with....
57. Oral Informants, *Ato Mollā Tadrā* and Dr. Solomon Inqui.
58. An interview Professor Bahru gave to *Tobiā* Vol. 3 No. 11, Yakātīt 7, 1988.
59. Recommendations on the Establishment of Centennial Board. A document available at T.D.A.
60. According to Dr. Solomon Inqui since books (especially history books) in Tigrīña were very few in number we published these books for the occasion. I found it very difficult to get these book in both Makale and Addis Ababa.
61. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 55 No. 257 Yakātīt 18, 1988 and *Ethiopian Herald* Vol. LII No. 140, 24 February, 1996 and Oral informant, *Ato Tafari Wassan*.
62. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 55 No. 258, Yakātīt 19, 1988 and *Ethiopian Herald* Vol. LII No. 142, 25 February 1996.
63. *Andnat* Vol. 2 No. 24, Yakātīt 23, 1988 and Oral informants, *Ato Sāhlu Assafā* and *Ato Silashī Andāрге*.
64. Oral informant, Professor Andreas Eshate
65. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 55 No. 259, Yakātīt 20, 1988 and IES Bulletin Special Issue No. 6, 1996, pp22-25.
66. Ibid.
67. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 55 No 260, Yakātīt 21, 1988 and *Ethiopian Herald* Vol. LII No. 142, 27 February 1996 .
68. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 55 No. 261, Yakātīt 22, 1988 and Report broadcast by ETV on 28 February 1996.
69. Oral informant, Dr. Nagasso Gidada.
70. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 55 No. 261, Yakātīt 22, 1988 and A news report broadcast by ETV on 28th of February 1996.
71. Ibid.
72. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 55 No 262, Yakātīt 23, 1988 and Ibid.
73. Ibid and *Ethiopian Herald* Vol. LII No. 147, 3 March 1996.

74. *Tomār* Vol. 3 No. 28, Yakātīt 7, 1988
75. Oral informant, Dr. Nagasso Gidada.
76. *Addis Zaman* Vol 55 No. 262, Yakātīt 23 1988 and A news report broadcast by ETV on 28 February 1996 and *Ethiopian Herald* Vol. LII No. 147, 3 March 1996.
77. Ibid.
78. *Addis Zaman* Vol.55 No263, Yakātīt 24, 1988.
79. Oral informant, *Mamhir* Tawalda Madhin Bayana.
80. *Addis Zaman* Vol.55 No. 263, Yakātīt 24, 1988.
81. Oral Informant *Waizaro* Algānash Ratā and *Ato* Waras Girmāy.
82. *Addis Zaman* Vol.55 No. 263 Yakātīt 24, 1988. The Square was chosen by the Tigray Committee that the Ethiopian war generals were believed to have discussed about the plans of the war.
83. *Addis Zaman* or *Ethiopian Herald* does not confirm this information. But I got it from the visual document of E.T.V.
84. *Addis Zaman* Vol. 55 No.263, Yakātīt 24, 1988.
85. Oral informant, *Ato* Molā Tādā , *Ato* Waras Girmay, *Ato* Birhāna Dastā and *Waizaro* Algānash Ratā
86. Oral informants, *Ato* Waras Girmāy, Birhāna Dastā and *Waizaro* Algānash Ratā.
87. Oral informants, *Ato* Sāhle Saifu and Silashī Andārgē
88. Government as well as non-government press did not raise discussions in relation to the Victory of Adwa.
89. *Addis Zaman* Vol.56 No 147 Yakātīt 24 1989 and Vol. 57 No. 145 Yakātīt 24, 1990. The new square in Addis Ababa was infact destroyed due to the construction of the ring road. The one in Adwa is almost destroyed. When I visited the area the cultural houses as well as the seedlings are destroyed. The pledge to erect a memorial monument to the heroes is not implemented.
90. Oral informant, Dr. Nagasso Gidada.
91. Ibid.
92. *Efoyta* No.109 Yakātīt 24, 1991.

93. Oral informant, Dr. Nagasso Gidada.
94. A call addressed to the residents of Addis Ababa from the Addis Ababa City Administration broadcast by the ETV on 28 February 1999.
95. *Addis Zaman* Vol.58 No.145, Yakātit 23, 1991.
96. Ibid and a special report on the commemoration of the 103rd Anniversary of the Victory of Adwa and the resounding Victory of the Ethiopian army against Erirean Forces. A report broadcast bt ETV on 1 March 1999.
97. Ibid and *Addis Zaman* Vol. 58 No. 145, Yakātit 23,1991.
98. Ibid

Chapter Five

End Notes

1. This may be understood from the large number of poems published in the periodicals during the reigime of Emperor Hailesselase.
2. Especially during the *Darg* period, there were a large number of poems written during Adwa Day. It is difficult to know why there are a few poems

produced during the EPRDF time; one should investigate that in the future. It can be said that the victory of Adwa was most remembered by poetry than any other literary works. There are too many of them in the newspapers.

3. Mulumabet Zanaba and Agāradach Jamānah, "Gaṣa Adwa Bagtim Dirsatoch Wist", Adwa Centenary Conference Papers February 26-2 March, Addis Ababa, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1996, Vol II, p.5.

4. All Facists* standing at Adwa

They were waiting for him (Menelik) what would come*

Facists were proud of their weapon

Menelik* defeated them by his arms.

In the second line (Menelik) is the gold meaning

In the fourth line (Menelik) is the surface meaning.

Poems regarding Adwa some times fail to place the event in its correct time.

See Fakada Azaza's important article presented on the Centenary of Adwa, on poems that fail to place events according to their appropriate time.

Addis Zaman Vol. 25 No. 354, Yakātit 23, 1958.

5. That evil was crushed by Menelik

And buried by Tafari

We, the sons of Tafari, feel proud

Our enemy is dead and will not arise again.

Addis Zaman Vol. 25 No. 339, Yakātit 6, 1958.

6. By horse by horse on his turn by horse

In to the extended field he fought

With such bravery, he showed his power

He started capturing his enemies

In such away from all those people

Makonnin on his horse entered in to the midst of the fight and destroyed the enemy.

Addis Zaman Vol. 11 No. 44, Magābit 5, 1944.

7. Menelik was protected by his God

This was witnessed by the fact that

St. George fought on his (Menelik's) side

This is not false for many spoke about it
And even his enemies witnessed.

Addis Zaman Vol.9 No. 45 Yakātīt 28, 1942.

8.If you want to know the history of Adwa
Awake Gabayahu and let him tell you
Abanafso Bālchā the architect of the war
He was chasing his enemy like beasts.

Addis Zaman Vol. 41 No. Yakātīt 13, 1978

9.Sacrifice of blood for freedom

On that day for which forefathers paid their lives
Adwa
The heritage of confident generation
The symbol of being Ethiopian
Adwa

Tsegaye Geberemedhin, Esat Way Abeba,(Addis Ababa,Birhāninā Salām
Kedamawi HailesselasiePrinting Press,1966 E.C), pp.54-55.

10. Oh! Tell me Adwa

I am confused
Was only the Emperor and the Empress who defeated the enemy
Or the Victory belongs to the people.

Addis Zaman Vol. 36 No. 248, Yakātīt 23, 1968

11. What is written on Adwa in our blood

Our Victory is glorious and let the world narret it
By our inherited heroism with the struggle of the oppressed people
We repeated that Victory against reactionaries.

“Badamu Talalfual”, Yakātīt 27,1972. A poem I got from the collection of
Hagar Fiqir Theatre.Hagar Fiqir Ya Zamanāwi Muziqa Ṭirāz, No. 3

12. The patriots of Adwa, heroes of my country

Renew my history by making history
Leaders of Somali are realy mad
Let alone Ogaden we will not give you
A hundfull of sand.

Addis Zaman Vol.35 No.1441, Tikimt 5, 1970 .

13. Adwa, Adwa ! Anti- Imperialist struggle

Today, Tommorow you shall be a signal of history.

Addis Zaman Vol. 36 No.133, Yakātīt 23, 1971.

14. In my discussions with *Ato Māmo Widnah* and *Ato Ayālnah Mulāt*, they told me that the propaganda works during the Red Star Campaign in Eritrea, the Battle of *Dogali* and *Ras Alulā* that were purposefully used.

I smell the fresh blood of Adwa

I remembered the day of Maichew

How *Wayāne* dares to defame me.

Yazaritu Itiopia Vol. 39 No.5 Yakātīt 23, 1983.

15. Today there is Adwa in our borders

We are their (patriots) sons and our bravery does not die

Addis Zaman Vol.50 No.138, Yakātīt 23, 1983.

16. Adwa Adwa Tell me what Awalom said

What he did

How was the heroism of Tigreans

Let us remember February

Adwa let me remember you

The heroism of Tigreans, which is known to the world

What our fathers said, our sovereignty

Our country

What ever Chavunists say

And conceal the truth

The resounding deeds of our forfathers

It shall not evade forever.

A poem I got from the Library of the Voice of the Revolutionary People of Tigray broadcast in the 98 Anniversary of the Victory of Adwa.

17. The Tigreans with the Amharas

The Oromo paid their lives

The Shinasha with the Gurage

Chanted with one Language

How can I site these all
How can I call these all
Let me call them collectively
Let me say them Ethiopians.

Addis Zaman Vol. 56 No. 253 , Yakātīt 24, 1984

18. *Dāñaw** is considered as wicked and fingers are pointed at him

Evil was talked about him
Dāñaw shall not be demolished
Why would it be destroyed?
But *Dāñaw* is heritage, glory and beauty.

*It was the horse name of Emperor Menelik

Addis Zaman Vol.50 No.181, Tāhsās 8, 1984.

19. Oh! ...Adwa! Adwa! Adwa

Do not loose ground in us; let you not be forgotten until the end of
days
Let you remain! Let us not miss you! Let us not miss you! Come every
year.

Tobiā Vol.4 No.5, Yakātīt 1988.(This is *Tobiā*'s Magazine)

20. Like Rat digging hole

Italy advanced into Tigray
I have gone forthand you should come

Who said these?

Was it not Menelik?

Andnat Vol.2 No. 18 , Hidār 29, 1988.For the commemoration of the
Victory of Adwa, Kassā Gabrahīwot published poetry in the form of a book.
In his short book, he synthesizes the perpetual wars Ethiopia fought with
external powers and writes the cause, course and consequence of the Battle
of Adwa. Kassā Gabrahīwot, Ya Adwa Dil Matāsabiā Gitmoch,Addis
Ababa,1988.

21.Coming through for 103 years

Today you reached us
We, your children, retained your tradition

Who ever remembers Adwa

From Bādima From Shirāro.

Addis Zaman Vol. 58 No. 145, Yakātīt 23, 1991.

22. Dagmawi Faysā, “Itiopiawian Yatarik Jagnoch Batalayayu Şahafi Tawnet Ayin,” (BA Thesis AAU, Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature ,1980)p.2.

23. Ibid.

24. Alame Eshete , The Cultural Situation in Ethiopia, (UNESCO, Paris 1982), p.25. Tākala Waldahawāryāt also published a play on Adwa in 1992(E.C) I found it after I completed my thesis therefore I did not discuss it. Ato Māmo Widnah told me that he produced *Ras Alulā Abānagā* but the Victory of Adwa was not part of the play.

25. Sahlu Kidane , “Tewodros Ba Si na tibabi Sirāwoch West” in Taddassa Bayana, Richard Pankrust, and Shefaraw Bakala Kassa and Kassa, Addis Ababa University, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1990, p.74.

26. Malāka Haylu, Kaṅawnā Adwa, (Addis Ababa: Artistic Printing Press, 1953 E.C) , pp.3-88.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Tafarā Makonnin “Gaşa Adwa Ba Teatre Dirsatoch Wist.” in International Conference in the centenary of Adwa, Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1996, 277-299 .

31. Oral informant, Ato Tasfāye Gabramāriām.

32. Tāmīrāt Gabayahu , “Wuchale 17”, Addis Ababa: National Theatre 1982(E.C). I got this script with the help of Ato Getāchaw Dabālke

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

35. Oral informants, Ato Getāchaw Dabālke and Ato Tasfāye Gabramāriām.

36. See the publications of *Addis Zaman* through out the imperial period especially the publications close to the Adwa Day. When a border conflict

erupted between Somalia and Ethiopia. Maichew then Adwa were used to arouse the fighting spirit of the people

37. See the publications of *Addis Zaman* through out the *Darg* period especially the publications close to the Adwa Day.

38. See the publication of *Addis Zaman* especially the publications close to Adwa Day.

39. See the publications of *Addis Zaman* close to Adwa Day and *Efoyta* No.109 Yakātīt 24, 1991.

40. Ibid.

41. Beka Namu, Adwa na Menelik, (Addis Ababa: Artistic Printing Press, 1956 E.C) ; Peter, Petrides, Ya Adwaw Jagnā , (Addis Ababa: Birhāni nā Salām Kadāmāwī Haillesselasie Printing Press, 1963 E.C); Kabada Dastā, Matawāwakīā, (Addis Ababa: Tinsāe Za Gubāe Printing Press, 1948 E.C); Birhānu Dinke, Ya Itiopia Achir Tārīk, (Addis Ababa: Tinsāe Za Gubāe Printing Press, 1950 E.C); Ali Kabada, Andnat nā Hibrat Ya Naṣanat Masarat, (Addis Ababa: Artistic Printing Press, 1955 E.C); Taklaṣādīq Makurīa, Ka Aṣe Tewodros Eska Aṣe Hailasilāsie, (Addis Ababa: Birhaninā Salām Kadāmāwī Haillesselasie Printing Press, 1948 E.C.).

42. Carolyn Hamilton, Terrefic Majesty: The Power of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), p.20.

43. Damaka Matāfarīa seems to have foretold in his novel that there would be serious cleavage in commemorating the Centenary of Adwa among the people of Ethiopia and its leadership. This was in fact what happened thirty-two years after his book was published. In his historical novel, Māmo Widnih narrates the story of *Ras Alulā Abānagā*. The story tells the heroic deeds *Ras Alulā Abānagā* performed through out his life: the wars he led against the Egyptians, the Dervishes, and the Italians. He is depicted as the ardent enemy of Italy. Moreover, the writer although very briefly narrates the decisive contribution *Ras Alulā Abānagā* had, in the battles of Alage, Makale and Adwa.

44. Kabada Dastā , p.85.

45. Bekā Namu, p.23 ; Birhānu Dinke, p.85.
46. Bekā Namu; p. Taklašādīq Makurīa, p. 87; Birhānu Dinke, p.86 .
47. Ibid .
48. Bekā Namu, p.24 ; Taklašādīq Makurīa, p.87.
49. Taklašādīq Makurīa, p.87.
50. Ibid; p.88 ; Ali Kabbada, p.51 ; Bekā Namu, p. 25; Petrides, p.172.
51. Taklašādīq Makurīa, p.90.
52. Bekā Namu, p. 28 Petrides , p.181.
53. Kabada Dastā, p.91.
54. Ibid ; Ali Kabbada, pp.52-53.
55. Taklašādīq Makurīa, pp.96-97 ; Petrides, pp.198-201.
56. Ibid, p.; Bekā Namu, p.38.
57. Taklašādīq Makurīa, pp.101; Kkada Dasta, p.98.
58. Habtamāriam Assafā , Ya Itiopia Tārīk Ţiyākewoch nā Bāhloch”, (Addis Ababa, 1986 E.C), pp.700-701.
59. Ibid.
60. Tawalda Tikue, Ya Itiopia Andnat na Itāliā, (Addis Ababa: 1990) , p.340.
61. Ibid, p.341.
62. Ibid.
63. Ataklti Hagos, Wafri Midhān, (Addis Ababa: Mega Printing Press, 1992 E.C), pp.17-18.
64. Ibid.
65. *Andnat* Vol.2 No. 20 , Tāhsās 27, 1988.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid; Vol.2 No.21, Tir 11, 1988.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid; Vol.2 No.22, Tir 25, 1988.
70. Ibid.
71. The program was broadcast in the 98 anniversary of the Victory of Adwa. In the earlier reports and in the latter reports we do not find quiet different perspective from what has been discussed. The discussion I have made in

the text was prepared by higher officials of the leaders of TPLF according to the information I got from a librarian working there. In fact, Dr. Kinfu gave an interview to *Wayin*, I chose to use the Information I got from the Voice of the Revolutionary People of Tigray since it clearly pointed out the stand of TPLF.

72. *Urgi* Vol. No. , Yakātit 19, 1988

73. Ibid.

74. *Urgi* Vol. 2 No. 49, Yakātit 26, 1988.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid.

78 Ibid.

CHAPTER SIX

END NOTES

1. Oral informants, *Ato Zawde Taklu* and *Ato Abāta Makuriā*.
2. Oral informant, *Ato Abāta Makuriā*.
3. Ibid; *Addis Zaman* Hidar 17 1979 Vol. 48 No. 373
4. *Ya Adwa Kitat Zamachā*. A film available in the Ethiopian Television.
5. Oral informants, *Ato Zawda Taklu* and *Ato Abāta Makuriā*.
6. Oral informant, *Ato Abāta Makuriā*.
7. IES Bulletin, pp.26-29.
8. *Adwa: A Resounding Call for Freedom*. A film on the victory of Adwa available in the IES.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. *Teclahaimanot Gebrasselasi*, p.167.
13. Ibid.
14. *Hagar Fiqir Theatre*, p.51.
15. Oral informant *Ato Marhawi Sitot*.
16. Oral informants, *Ato Getāchaw Dabālke* and *Ato Marhawi Sitot*.
17. *Raising Palm up to Alage*
He sent them defeated all in all
Yes, yes sprinkled in blood
Loyal to his master, Gobena Dachew
Dañaw Menelik who is Judicial
By his religion, he gets his country fell proud
He sung it for the first time in 1956 (E.C).
18. *Alame Eshete*, p.25.
19. *Woube Kassaye*, "Analysis of Culture for Planning Curriculum: The Songs Produced in the Three Main Languages of Ethiopia (Amharic, Oromigna and

Tigrigna), (PhD Thesis, University of Joensuu,2002),pp.101-102 and Oral informants, Ato Alamu Gabraāb.

20. For many thousand years, you have been respected

You are fenced by the bones of heroic fathers

The spirit of heroism is also with us

The unity of Ethiopia shall not be challenged

Many fathers died we buried many mothers

It is through that the country remains sovereign

Let us die today to repeat history

Sothat Ethiopia shall live respected

Tāmrāt Molā, 1970(E.C).

21. But whosoevr casts evil on our country

We are determined, we cannot bear attack

You have been respected by the blood of our forefathers

Mother Ethiopia whoever tries to defame you let him be destroyed

Mahamud Ahmad, 1973 (E.C).

22 . The carcass of patriots is sweeter than honey

At the fields of Makdela, Mettema, Maichew Adwa

The enemy did not judge and was not judged

My Menelik, Zeray, the lion

You initiate to fight even in dream without you being rose again

What has the fathers kept, a son shall not destroy

When it was said that the country was about to be dismembered

Balcha is born and bore fruit again.

Rāhel Yohannis and Tashoma Asagid ,1981(E.C).

23.Richard Pankrust, “The Battle of Adwa (1896) As Depicted by Traditional Ethiopian Artists” in the History of Ethiopian Arts. (Institute of the University of London: The Pindar Press.1989), p.78. The paintings of the Cathedral of Saint George were restored and it was decorated by new paintings in 1952 E.C. But the Emperor did not include the battle of Adwa.

24.Ibid;p.79 Biniam Zeray,p.9. and Richard Pankhrust,pp79-95.

25.Ibid.

26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
- 28 Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Oral informants, *Ato Zarihun Yatmgetā* and *Ato Warku Mamo*.
31. Ethiopia in Fine Arts, Ministry of Culture and Sports Affairs, (Addis Ababa: Berhanena Selam, 1991), p. 14 .
32. According to *Ato Warku Māmo*, this painting depicts Emperor Menelik afar the battle Empress Taitu in the middle to tell that they both led the war. *Ras Makonnin* seated on a white horse is shown penetrating into the midst of the enemy .This work is not available in the School of Fine Arts.
33. Afawark Mangashā , *Ya Adwa Dil*, (School of Fine Arts, 1956); Fissaha Isaias “*Ya Adwa Kind*”, (School of Fine Arts , 1981) and Yosef Abata “*Ya Adwa Tornat*”, (School of Fine Arts, 1996).
34. Fessaha Isaias.
35. Ibid.
36. Oral informant *Ato Warku Māmo*; Geta Mäonnen, (Tr. and ed) Worku Mammo, Paintings and Drawings, (Addis Ababa: Semayata, 1996), p. 10; 20.
37. Eshatu Tirunah, “*Magnanimity of the Victor*”, 1996. He says that he started the work of this painting during the *Darg* period but he could not complete it due to various reasons.
38. Hirut Alamayahu, “*Ya Ethiopia Şahay*”, (School of Fine Arts), 1982
39. Oral informants, *Ato Worku Mamo* and *Ato Fāntu Arare Adwa* Conference Folder no, 2, Adwa Press, Adwa Exhibition, Adwa Centenary Conference Registration Form and Others. *Ya Adwa Matoña Baāl Akababar Mahdar*, 1988 (E.C).
40. The sculpture is found at the back of the administrative block of the School of Fine Arts.
41. These sculptors are presently found in a very precarious situation the National Museum .The fact that they were not made from stone made them perishable.

42. Ibid ;This sculptor is found in the present day Assembly hall near the main campus of the.AA.U. I got no one to tell me about it and there are no maps that would help one to identify the various mountains as a result I cannot extend the discussion.

43. Oral informant, Ato Bakala Makonnin.

44. *Waizaro Aynālam Miru* who is an art historian working in the National Museum said that the whole work was done with out careful study and preparations.

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Printing Press, 1950 E.C.
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