

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

YİLMA DÉRÉSSA: A POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY
(1907-1979)

BY
TAMRAT HAILE DEGEFFA

JUNE 2016.

YİLMA DÉRÉSSA: A POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY

(1907-1979)

BY

TAMRAT HAILE DEGEFFA

SUBMITTED

**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN HISTORY**

ADVISER

PROFESSOR TESEMA TA'A

JUNE 2016.

Addis Ababa University
Graduate Programs Office

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Tamrat Haile, entitled: "Yilema Deressa: A Political Biography (1907-1979)" and submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor Philosophy (in History) complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the Examining Committee:

Examiner: Charles Schaefer Signature [Signature] Date 21/6/16
Examiner: Shiferaw Bekele Signature [Signature] Date 21/06/16
Advisor: Tesema Taa Signature [Signature] Date 21/6/16

Samuel Negash [Signature]
Chair of Department or Graduate Program Coordinator



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
List of Figures and illustration	iv
Acronyms	v
Transliteration System	vii
Acknowledgments	viii
Abstract	ix
Preface	x
Chapter One: Introduction	1
1.1 Biography	1
1.2 An Overview of the Literature: General	8
1.3 An Overview of Biographical Works in Ethiopia	13
1.4 Review of Related Literature on Yīlma Déréssa	26
1.5 Statement of the Problem	35
1.6 Objective of the Study	36
1.7 Significance of the Study	37
1.8 . Research Methodology	39
Chapter Two: Historical Context	47
2.1. The Ethiopian State	50
2.2. Major Historical Developments	66
2.3. Institutions and Political Practices of the Ethiopian State	75

2.4. Tensions in the Imperial State	88
2.5. Environmental Setting.....	91
Chapter Three: The Formative Years (1907-1941).....	96
3.1. Family Background and Childhood (1907-1935).....	96
3.2. Modern Education: From Čutta to London.....	110
3.3. Yılma in the Black Lion Organization, the Western [Oromo] Confederation, His Subsequent Exile and Return (1935-1941).....	120
Chapter Four: Preliminary Responsibilities and Initiatives: 1941-1942....	139
4.1. Centralized Taxation	143
4.2. Establishment of the Finance Bureaucracy.....	155
4.3. Yılma’s Initiative for a New Ethiopian Currency	161
4.4. Commencing Budgeting	172
Chapter Five: Yılma as a Vice-Minister: Building up the Ministry of Finance and Other Responsibilities (1942-1949)	191
5.1 Yılma Déréssa in the Response to the British Hegemonic Position in Ethiopia	192
5.2 Yılma after the Establishment of the Ministry of Finance.....	219
5.3 Yılma Déréssa beyond the Ministry of Finance	235

Chapter Six: Yılma Déréssa in Commerce and Diplomacy (1949-1960)	249
6.1. Yılma in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (1949-1953).....	249
6.2. Yılma in Diplomacy and Foreign Affairs (1953-1960)	259
Chapter Seven: Yılma Déréssa at the Apex of Power and His Gradual Retirement from State Politics (1960-1971)	281
7.1. Returning to the Ministry of Finance (1960-68).....	282
7.2. The Last Years of Yılma's Official Government Service (1969-1971).....	308
Chapter Eight: Yılma Déréssa beyond Official Government Service:	
Literary Works, Folktales about Him and this Personal Life	335
8.1. The Writings of Yılma Déréssa.....	325
8.2. The Folktales about Yılma Déréssa	351.
8.3. The Private Life and the Last years of Yılma Déréssa.....	361
Conclusions	378
Bibliography	385
Appendices	

List of Figures and Illustration

Figure 1. Čutaa St. George Church	103
Figure 2. <i>Adé</i> (Mrs.) Čaltu Sonto Dénta	105
Figure 3. <i>Bilata</i> Déréssa Amänté Bäkäre.....	106
Figure 4. <i>Ato</i> Yılma Déréssa in London (1933).....	118
Figure 5. <i>Ato</i> Yılma Déréssa in Ponza(<i>Ca.</i> 1937-1940)	136
Figure 6. <i>MärhaTibäb</i> Printing House.....	213
Figure 7:Emperor Hailä-Silassé I and <i>Ato</i> Yılma Déréssa(1971).....	294
Figure 8: <i>Ato</i> Yılma Déréssa (1971)	316
Figure 9: The Witty <i>Ato</i> Yılma Déréssa with colleagues.	358
Figure 10: <i>Ato</i> Yılma Déréssa with his Family.....	366
Figure 11: <i>Villa</i> Yılma Déréssa	369
Chart 1: Organizational Structure of the Ministry of Finance (1940s).....	156

Acronyms

AAU: Addis Ababa University

EAS: East African Shilling

FEA: Foreign Economic Administration

FO: Foreign Office

HSIU: Haile-Selassie I University

IBRD: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

IEG: Imperial Government of Ethiopia

IES: Institute of Ethiopian Studies

IMF: International Monetary Fund

LSE: London School of Economics and Political Science

MAAG: Military Assistance Advisory Group

MOFA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MOFED: Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

MTD: Maria Theresa Dollar

NALA: National Archive and Library Agency

OAU: Organization of African Unity

PMAC: Provisional Military Administrative Council

SYL: Somali Youth League

UN: United Nations

UNECA: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

Transliteration System

I have used the following Transliteration System

I. The Seven Sounds of Ethiopic alphabet are represented as follows.

በ Bā

ቡ Bu

ቢ Bi

ባ Ba

ቤ Bé

ብ Bī

ቦ Bo

II. Platalized sounds are represented as follows:

ሸ Š

ቸ Č

ጽ Ñ

ሸ Ž

ጀ Ğ

III. Glotalized are represented as follows:

ቀ Q

ጠ Ṭ

ጨ Ḥ

ጸ Ṣ

Acknowledgements

This study on a life and times of an important personality in twentieth century Ethiopia has not been the result of an individual effort. To its completion, a number of individuals and institutions have made meaningful contributions. In this regard, my thanks go primarily to my adviser, Professor Tesema Ta'a, for his unreserved support from the inception of this research to its final delivery. As a dedicated adviser, he helped me in reading, correcting and commenting on the draft dissertation. I am also grateful to my informants, especially *Ato* Asfaw Damt , *Ato* Bul a D m qsa, *W yz ro* Sophia Y lma D r ssa and *Ato* Y man  D m sse, who have unreservedly recounted their experience with my subject of study almost any time I needed for. These individuals also shared to me valuable written materials and oral testimonies at their disposal.

Officials as well as individuals at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Cultural and Tourism Bureau of Western W ll ga Zone of Oromiya National Regional State and W ll ga Museum have supported this research by providing materials and facilitating my oral and archival research. I thank all of them very much. I would also like to thank *Ato* B ruk M sfin, *W yz ro* Q d st, *Ato* D m ss  F nt y , *Ato* Hallelujah Lull , *Ato*   m l s Abdissa, *Li'ul* B 'id -Mariam M konnin, Dr. Tamrat Was'y hun, *Ato* Mikias Hailu, Surafel G lg lo, *Ato* Nuroy  Abt w and *W yz ro* B zun   L t'y b lu who have by one or another way provided substantial input into this dissertation. My heartfelt gratitude also goes to my extended family especially to my wife  m b t Az n  and daughters, Hallelujah and Dagmawit Tamrat. I have no words to express the extent of my whole family's invaluable assistance in my all academic career. Finally, credit goes to the Addis Ababa University and Haromaya University for they covered part of the expenses of this study.

Abstract

Yilma Déréssa: A Political Biography (1907-1979)

Tamrat Haile Degeffa

Addis Ababa University, 2016

This dissertation investigates the life of Yilma Déréssa (1907-1979), a prominent Minister of Finance, diplomat, author and statesman in the Imperial Government of Ethiopia. As this study attempts to examine a political biography of an individual, discussion on fundamental issues related to biography becomes a significant academic endeavor. Therefore, the dissertation first seeks to address essential disciplinary and historiographical issues in an attempt to integrate this study with the relevant body of knowledge and to give a full picture of Yilma Déréssa in broader perspective. Born into an Oromo aristocratic family in Wälläga at the beginning of the twentieth century, he was acquainted with modern education in his home village near Gimbi in 1910s. Instrumental to this was his father, Bilatta Déréssa Amänté who accustomed himself and his family more to the new developments at Addis Ababa than to the ways of his forefathers in Wälläga. Leaving Gimbi for good in early 1920s, Bilatta Déréssa enabled his son Yilma and other family members to pursue their modern education in Addis Ababa, later on Alexandria (Egypt) and finally London (England). Yilma had begun his state service at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1933. Except for the short period of Italian invasion that forced him to spend those years in warfare, exile and collaboration, Yilma spent a great part of his public life in building core institution and introducing momentous bureaucratic practices in the Ethiopian government until 1974. Assisted by the British financial advisor and his Ethiopian associates, Yilma did establish the Ministry of Finance both bureaucratically and legislatively. In the consecutive three decades since 1941, he engaged also in diverse economic, diplomatic and cultural activities of immense national importance. As his educational training, the public responsibilities he took on and his personal successes and failures had defined Yilma's individuality, his social background as an Oromo statesman also constituted his identity. The source materials for this research are collected from different government archives, private document collections and knowledgeable informants. The whole process of synthesis and analysis of the sources has empirically as well as logically proven the thesis of the study. In this dissertation, I argue that Yilma Déréssa, as an Oromo individual of noble origin from a periphery, adjusted himself to the new historical developments at the center and, more importantly, reinforced the political system enthusiastically with the new skills acquired in the process essentially as state bureaucratic functionary. In doing so, he followed the path that his forefathers had pursued earlier on. The value of this dissertation in historical study lies in its investigation to uncover novel empirical data and their logical interpretation, in its deliberation on the place of individuals in history, and finally in its attempt to illuminate important themes in Ethiopian history through a biographical approach. These help to supplement the existing body of knowledge.

Preface

The major objective of this research is to reconstruct the public and personal lives of Yīlma Déréssa(1907-1979), an Ethiopian statesman, diplomat, politician and author during the Imperial Government of Ethiopia. To that effect, the writer has been dealing with a variety of source materials for more than thirteen months. Not to minimize the significance of secondary sources which are consulted through a major task of library research, official as well as private written and visual documents are organized, examined, cross-checked and utilized mainly gathered from the archives of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development(MOFED), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs(MOFA), the National Archive and Library Agency(NALA), *Şāhafē Tī'zaz Wäldä Mäsqäl Tariku* Memorial Archive Center of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies and private collections. Maximum effort is also made to collect oral information from family members, people who worked with *Ato* Yīlma, colleagues and other informants in Gimbi, Nāqāmtē and Addis Ababa. All these corpora of literature and sources reveal that the life account of *Ato* Yīlma Déréssa is part and parcel of some of the important political, economic and social changes in Ethiopia in the twentieth century.

Excluding the conclusion, this study consists of eight chapters. Almost all are organized chronologically which is a conventional approach in such writing. At times, some developments are presented thematically. Chapter one attempts to address issues related to the concept and practice of biographical study and gives a general survey of historiography especially at the national level. Furthermore, having examined how *Ato* Yīlma was discussed in the existing literature, the chapter attempts to emphasize the need to reconstruct the life account of the subject of the study with new insights and historical data. In this respect, the discussion on the nature and varieties of sources is in order.

Based on empirical data and conceptual framing, chapter two attempts to present historical context for the life and works of *Ato Yilma Déréssa* in the hope of situating him in a proper setting. Considering the very fact that most of *Ato Yilma's* life was closely related to state politics, the Ethiopian state, its institutions and relevant developments associated with it are presented as major historical backdrop for a political biography of *Ato Yilma Déréssa*. This enables us not only to study the path that *Ato Yilma's* family, as a regional class of nobility, pursued within the new central political and social formation but also to shed light on how and why *Ato Yilma* acted and was acted upon in the setting throughout his public and private life.

Chapter three seeks to reconstruct the life of *Ato Yilma* from his early childhood in the 1910s to his first public responsibilities in the 1930s as well as the hard times during the period of war and exile due to the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. Particularly, the chapter attempts to explain how *Ato Yilma* was introduced to modern education since his childhood. However, this discussion goes beyond the time of *Ato Yilma's* birth so as to explain the relevant family and social background of the subject of study. In this regard, the chapter shows the responses of *Yilma's* noble family to new political developments associated with the advent of the Ethiopian state in Wälläga since the last quarter of the 19th century. This constitutes one major theme of this dissertation.

Chapter four aims at reconstructing the initial accomplishments of *Ato Yilma Déréssa* especially in laying the foundations of the Ministry of Finance, an institution that later became instrumental to fiscal centralization and the monetization of the Ethiopian economy in post the 1941 period. During this brief, yet, exceptionally crucial period of institutional development, the chapter shows that *Ato Yilma* had contributed greatly to the planning and commencing of national taxation, fiscal centralization and the new Ethiopian currency. Interestingly, *Yilma*, aged 33, was only a Director-General in the Ministry that had no seat in the Council of Ministers until his

promotion in November 1942. As to these preliminary responsibilities, besides the persistent oral testimony, by other informants Yīlma Déréssa himself attached much weight always, though the period was short. In fact, the chapter illustrates the initial motives, goals and passions of Yīlma Déréssa as well as his particular accomplishments as an individual in the post liberation period of Ethiopian economy.

Chapter five attempts to recount the undertakings of Yīlma Déréssa, now promoted as a Vice-Minister, hence empowered significantly, focusing mainly on Yīlma's engagements in Ethiopia's responses to the British influence. Yīlma also played crucial role in the legislative process which were highly instrumental for fiscal centralization as well as in the expansion of modern education in Ethiopia. The chapter covers the period between 1942 and 1949. Chapters four and five explain that Yīlma was exceedingly preoccupied with tasks of foundational nature in terms of legislation, institution and practice.

The next chapter aims at reconstructing Yīlma Déréssa's responsibilities in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (1949-1953), in the Ethiopian Embassy at Washington D.C. (1953-1958) and in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1958-1960). In these years, the subject of my study was preoccupied increasingly with issues related to international trade and politics. What makes his public life during these years different from the previous period(1941 to 1949) basically is that there weren't much 'foundations' to which his name is directly or indirectly associated. Nonetheless, the chapter attempts to mark out Yīlma Déréssa's contributions especially to the expansion of Ethiopia's foreign trade and investment as well as foreign political affairs.

Chapter seven deals mainly with Yīlma Déréssa's administrative accomplishments in the Ministry of Finance during the heydays of his power throughout the 1960s. The chapter

elucidates not only Yilma's achievements but also his flaws while taking on great responsibility in the government. His transfer from the Ministry of Finance to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism in 1969 and his eventual retirement from official government responsibility in 1971 just to join the Crown Council are also the focal points of this chapter.

Thematically, the above four chapters (from four to seven) present a single thesis part that strengthened the central argument of the study, though they marked variations due to the particularity of historical experiences. Once Yilma, like his father and grandfather, adjusted himself to a new political system, he had always taken a strong interest in reinforcing it. To that effect, he showed considerable individual initiative, purposefulness, enthusiasm, choice and creativity as a state bureaucratic functionary in introducing, building and recruiting modern practices, institutions and educated personnel respectively. However, due to the political developments in which Yilma never took part, while serving the central government tenaciously, there had been noticeable tendencies in the scanty literature overviewed in this study and oral information to correlate Yilma's promotion and retirement to the Oromo nationalist sentiment.

Finally, chapter eight examines the literary works of Yilma Déréssa and the oral literature about him. This chapter begins with an account of Yilma's works, both the newspaper articles and two history books, followed by a critical appraisal. With due consideration for the questions of what Jan Vansina calls "authenticity, authorship, locality, and dating",¹ the chapter also examines the political humor about him. This discussion explains how an actual aspect of Yilma's personality (wittiness) contributed to the political jokes. Conversely, it explains how the folktales not only augment the publicity of Yilma's "individuality" but also accentuate his social identity. The first two sections of this chapter, therefore, show that the question of Yilma's social identity as an

¹ Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985) ,54.

Oromo educated statesman take a center stage. Signifying the ethnic tension biographically, therefore, this theme reveals that the process of adaptation to the new political and social formation was difficult. Not far from this subject matter, the last chapter also discusses the private life of Yilma Déréssa since 1940s to his last days in prison in 1979. To sum up, individuals pursued diverse paths along the advent and consolidation of the Ethiopian centralized state in the 20th century. A political biography of Yilma Déréssa including a brief account of his family background shows that the family adjusted itself to the new political and social formation as well as became active historical agent in reinforcing the system.

Chapter One

Introduction

To write a biography of Yılma Déréssa(1907-1979), three interrelated disciplinary, historiographic and methodological issues in biographical study need to be addressed. The first deals with the place of biography in history, other social sciences and humanities. Focusing mainly on the general literature on the concept of biography, this discussion seeks to examine major disciplinary questions in the hope of situating the subject of my study within the much broader disciplinary questions of biography. The second gives an overview of historiography on biographical works at the national level, indeed, with a much summarized survey of similar kind at the global and continental levels. Furthermore, it attempts to examine the existing literature that made note of Yılma Déréssa. The third issue engages with the varieties and natures of source materials for a political biography of Yılma Déréssa. All these help to clarify presumably some disciplinary, historiographic and methodological questions and situate subject of the study within the context of relevant body of knowledge.

1.1. Biography

Biography¹, as a study of individual life, straddles both literature and history.² In the classification of the types of literature, literary scholars usually discuss biography as a non-fiction genre.³ “For students of biography in the West, the late seventeenth-century coinage of

¹ Explaining the variants of biography, Louis Smith noted that “life-writing comes with many labels-portrayals, portraits, profiles, memoirs, life stories, life histories, case studies, autobiographies, journals, diaries, and on and on-each suggesting a slightly different perspective under consideration.” See Louis M. Smith, “Biographical Method,” in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 1994), 287.

² Alun Munslow, *The Routledge Companion to Historical Studies* (New York: Taylor and Francis Group, second edition 2006), 46.

³ Nigel Hamilton, *Biography: A Brief History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 2. For instance, in *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th ed. biography together with autobiography is treated under the major entry of literature, see Vol 23.

the word ‘biography,’ as a term for literary rather than graphic depiction, was understandable; that century, after all, was an age of rising literacy and lexicography”.⁴ As a result, the prevalent production of biographical studies on the life and works of literary artists seem to justify the categorization of biography more under literature than history.⁵ Furthermore, biography is considered as a branch of literature most probably because it remarkably resembles fictional narrative in its story line (plot) and the prevalence of other elements of creative writing, for instance, a single protagonist.⁶ Yet, the techniques of research and the general rule for testing evidences make biography more scientific craft than imaginative art.⁷ Furthermore, whether an individual involves in a literary or any other lifelong career, his or her life in the past usually falls in the academic territory of history. In other words, history deals with the study of human past and writing the life of an individual is logically one aspect of historical study. In this respect, the view that “what matters in history are the character and the behavior of individuals has a long pedigree.”⁸

⁴ Hamilton, 2-3.

⁵ Here, we can mention two telling instances for this trend. In the Western world, James Boswell pioneered modern biography as he studied the life and works of Dr Samuel Jonson (1791). Leon Edel in his work on the concept and method of biographical study utilized extensively Boswell’s *Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* In life writing, of course, this has been considered as a classic piece of work. See Leon Edel, *Writing Lives: Principa Biographica* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1959); Hamilton, 91. In Ethiopia too, literary biography is the study subject of the students of Amharic literature. Yohannes Admasu’s study on the life and works of Yoftahe Negusei is a case in point (2012).

⁶ In novel, novella and short story, I assume that the fictional life story of an imaginative individual is narrated in the like manner as a true life writing or biography. The beginnings, middles and ends of a storyline in an individual biography are quite similar to the plot in fiction. Above all, the singularity of the study subject in biography matches a protagonist in fiction congruently. “The [fictional] narrative of events becomes the history of many biographies. Biography is in a sense both the zenith and nadir of the chronicler’s art, of the literary narrative form.” See Jeremy Black and Donald M. Mac Raild, *Studying History* (Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 98-99.

⁷ Paul Murray Kendall, “Biographical Literature,” in *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th ed. Vol 23 (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica Inc. 2005), 186.

⁸ E.H. Carr, *What is History?* (New York : Penguin Books, 1961). 45.

Biographical narratives, with their epic and spiritual tenor, were the common literary works throughout the medieval period.⁹ In Europe, as a result of ever increasing role of an individual in a society since the period of Renaissance, it is acclaimed that biography, by focusing on one life, eliminates the complications that weigh down accounts of the entire society, and it adheres to a narrative line that shows individuals in action. Proponents of biographical studies argue that life-writing “restores agency to history giving readers a sense of closeness to the men and women who shaped events. It deals with motivations and emotions.”¹⁰ Of all significances of biography, it “is indispensable to the understanding of motive and intention in the actions of individuals.”¹¹

Nonetheless, biography that “meets the requirements of modern scholarship is not without its critics. Many historians believe that it has no serious place in historical study.”¹² The criticism emanates from the suspected inability of individual biography to give causal explanations in history.¹³ It is argued that “biographical narrative encourages a simplified, linear interpretation of events.”¹⁴ These arguments seem to have been derived from unstipulated premise that biography and history are two separate disciplines; the former is conceptualized as the study of a particular subject matter (individual) and the latter as a discipline which focuses on wider processes, structures, contextual issues and generalizations about an era.¹⁵ This distinction was implied even two millennia ago when Plutarch, the author of the lives of Alexander the Great and Julius

⁹ Hamilton, 6-59; John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History Aims, methods and new directions in the study of modern history*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: Pearson Education Limited, 2002), 112.

¹⁰ Hamilton, 60; Robert Darnton, “Looking the Devil in the Face,” *New York Review of Books* (1995), 35.

¹¹ Tosh, 116.

¹² *Ibid.*, 115

¹³ *Ibid.*; Carr, 44-45.

¹⁴ Tosh, 115.

¹⁵ Kendall, 186.

Caesar in 100 A.D. notified that “it must be borne in mind that his design was not to write histories but lives.”¹⁶

Though biographical studies are at variance with history in terms of scope, it is similar to history methodologically. “Both biography and history, however, are concerned with the past, and it is in the hunting down, evaluating, and selection of sources that they are akin.”¹⁷ No matter how alike they are methodologically, again, biographical study is criticized because it tends to concentrate too much on agency alone. In this regard, the criticism against biography comes both from individual scholars and particular perspectives. More than even Marxist Structuralism, for example, it is the *Annales* School which is very critical of biographical study in History. The school, needless to say, is well known for its emphasis on the process and structure oriented nature of history.¹⁸

Furthermore, biography, as a literary work, is also attacked for its employment of a story line with beginnings, middles and ends which are common in imaginary narrative genres.¹⁹ With regard to this, it is argued that biographical approaches encourage a linear view of history—birth, life, death.²⁰ The criticism on biographical literature is across-the-board and “even successful biographies cannot escape criticism because most of the source materials to reconstruct the biography of an individual naturally deal with adult life, the years of childhood and youth or the

¹⁶ Hamilton, 24-25.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁸ Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution, The Annales School, 1929-1989* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990). Two French scholars are known as founding fathers of the school since late 1920s. “In 1929 Bloch and Febvre founded a historical journal called *Annales d'histoire sociale et économique*, usually known simply as *Annales*. In the first issue they demanded of their colleagues not just a broader approach but an awareness of what they could learn from other disciplines, especially the social sciences – economics, sociology, social psychology and geography (a particularly strong enthusiasm of the *Annales* historians).” Tosh, 121.

¹⁹ Munslow, 46.

²⁰ Dinah Birch, “Narratives of Fact,” in *The Times Literary Supplement*, (2003) quoted in Michael Benton, “Literary Biography: The Cinderella of Literary Studies,” *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (Autumn 2005): 46; Black and Donald M. Mac Rail, 99.

beginnings (sources are often limited)-what psychologists would call ‘formative’ periods-are often given only a few pages.”²¹ This is, truly, one limitation of my study too.

Even so, biography matters. The purpose of history is to study “what really had happened”²² in the past that “signifies events which have taken place, societies which have risen and fallen, ideas and institutions, eating habits, marital customs, all aspects of human behavior in the past, matters large and small.”²³ To a certain extent, of course, historical events are the results of human deeds. However, there “is nearly always a multiplicity of individual actions which, interacting together, produce consequences which no single individual willed.”²⁴ That said, the role of individuals in historical causation is, incidentally, context specific. For instance, “where communities or states are ruled by absolute or powerful individuals, much significance will be attached to the actions and decisions of such individuals.”²⁵ A good example in Ethiopian historiography is Emperor Hailä Sillassé, “a person who dominated the life of a country for more than half of a century.”²⁶ Therefore, biography, as a study of an individual’s life helps to enrich our knowledge of historical causation.

As an approach to other historical studies biography plays a crucial role in elucidating “important structural themes and subjective realities.”²⁷ Furthermore, directly or indirectly, historical

²¹ Black and Donald M. Mac Raild, 104.

²² Thomas Gil, “Leopold Ranke” in *A Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography*, ed. Aviezer Tucker (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009), 383.

²³ Arthur Marwick, *The Nature of History*, 3rd ed (London: MacMillan Inc. 1989), 1-2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 247.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Bahru Zewde, “Haile Sellassie: From Progressive to Reactionary” in *Ethiopia in Change Peasantry, Nationalism and Democracy*, ed. Abebe Zegeye and Siegfried Pausewang (London: British Academic Press, 1994), 31.

²⁷ Tony Woods, “Settlers and the State: A Political Biography of W.H. Timcke” in *Personalities and Political Culture and in Modern Africa*, ed. Melvin E. Page et al. (Boston: African Studies Center, Boston University, 1998), 135.

developments, events, practices as well as achievements basically emanate from human minds.²⁸ Putting individuals at the center-stage of historical developments, “biographical study breathes life into dry census data and puts faces on demographic tables.”²⁹ Seen from this perspective, conversely, history as a broader process and structural force has also been a target of scholastic assault. “History does nothing, it possess no immense wealth, fights no battle. It is rather man, real living [human] who does everything, who possesses and fights.”³⁰

Based on the biography-history dichotomy which intends to detach individuals from society, self from world, there is also a proposition to combine both studies through a third discipline, i.e., Sociology.³¹ To this end, it is argued that the sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society.³² However, not to mention the methodological differences between sociology and history, temporally, the major concern of all historical studies including biography is the past. On top of that, thematically, history does not know any boundary on anything that is human, whether a society or an individual lived in the modern or pre-modern period.

This conceptual deliberation eventually takes us to the intractable issue of agency-structure especially in sociology.³³ Of course, one of the contemporary critical historians also argues that

²⁸ Marwick, 247.

²⁹ Shirley A. Leckie, “Bioraphy Matters: Why Historians Need Well-Crafted Biographies More than Ever” in *Writing Biography: Historians and Their Craft*, ed. Lloyd E. Ambrosius (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 20.

³⁰ Marx-Engels: *Gesamtausgabe*, I, iii, p. 625. Quoted in Carr, 49.

³¹ Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 4-6.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ The problem of agency and structure is one of the much debated conceptualization mainly in sociology and to some extent in history (social history). These dual abstractions influenced the disciplines in the last two-three decades and the theoretical deliberation especially in sociology goes on with in-depth analysis till now. See Fernand Braudel and Immanuel Wallerstein, “History and the Social Sciences: The Longue Durée,” *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, Vol. 32, No. 2, Commemorating the Longue Durée (2009): 171-203; Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993); Alex Callinicos, *Making History: Agency, Structure and Change in Social Theory*, 2nd ed. (Lieden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2004); Margarith M. Archer, *Being Human: The Problem of Agency* (Edinburgh: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Francois Depelteau, “Relational Thinking: A

“among the best-known of the many dualities and oppositions in the organized study of the past is agency and structure.”³⁴ Still, the individual-society dissection might work in the Western world where individualism emerged more relatively along with modernization. Elsewhere, for instance in Ethiopia, an attempt to employ a word-concept of ‘modern individuality’, however, is a far-fetched scheme.³⁵ Contrasting a perspective in biographical study in the Western world against one in China, for instance, Kieth Schoppa comes to conclusion that “culture and context are crucial perspectives that must be taken into account by a biographer.”³⁶

Though not discussed in terms of theoretical frameworks, probably due to the Rankean tradition that prioritizes facts over concepts, historians do not fail to address the issue of historical context in biography as well as the role of an individual in the ‘vast, impersonal forces’ or what above all sociologists call Structure.³⁷ The life of an individual cannot be figured out better without the consideration of his/her environmental setting. In other words, “for historians, the essential requirement in a biography is that it understands the subject in his or her historical context.”³⁸ In his prominent book on the nature of history, E.H. Carr explains the issue duly:

The facts of history are indeed facts about individuals, but not about actions of individuals performed in isolation, and not about the motives, real or imaginary, from which individuals suppose themselves to have acted. They are facts about the relations of

Critique of Co-Deterministic Theories of Structure and Agency,” *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (March 2008): 51-73.

³⁴ Munslow, *The Routledge Companion*..., 23; Burk, *History and Social*..., 113.

³⁵ An attempt to dissociate Yilma Déréssa’s individuality from the cultural and historical context will make of this study incomplete.

³⁶ Here, it is important to emphasize the assumption that, compared to the place of an individual in a society in the West, an individual in Twentieth century Ethiopia does resemble more an individual in China. As Schoppa argues, “it is a commonplace to say that while the basic social unit in the modern West is the individual, in China it is the group....There is a fundamentally different definition for both the individual and the group in these two cultures. In the modern West individuals precede the group; in China the group precedes the individual.” R.Keith Schoppa, “Culture and Context in Biographical Studies: The Case of China” in *Writing Biography: Historians and Their Craft*, ed. Lloyd E. Ambrosius (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 31, 49.

³⁷ Gil, 384. Carr, 45-49.

³⁸ Tosh, 114.

*individuals to one another in society and about the social forces which produce from the actions of individuals results often at variance with, and sometimes opposite to, the results which they themselves intended.*³⁹

As it is well stated in the above quotation, historical context is inseparable from an individual life and, vice-versa.⁴⁰ Apparently, it is because of this fact that many biographers prefer discussing their study subject within the ‘*life-work-and-times*’ approach in which the individual is contextualized in the light of contemporary society.⁴¹ This approach sometimes is called ‘historical biography’ and, with its more focus on the individual, and as part of community, class and social group,⁴² is commendable for two reasons. First, it enables a biographer to situate the individual within the appropriate historical context. Secondly, it shows the significance of biographical study in illuminating a far wider sector of human experience.⁴³ It is in this sense that I have planned to reconstruct the life and career of *Ato Yilma Déréssa*.

1.2. An Overview of the Literature: General

That being the brief conceptual deliberation forwarded in a few words, let us look at a short life-account of biography itself beginning from the global context. The need to depict the life of an individual precedes both the emergence of individual ethos and the serious academic endeavor with the advent of modern historical studies. “The earliest biographical writing probably

³⁹ Carr, 52. This is what theoreticians of Sociology call co-determinism of agency and structure. See Francois Depelteau, (2008).

⁴⁰ This is what theoreticians of Sociology call Co-determinism of agency and structure, i.e., the reciprocal impact of one over the other. In contemporary sociology, it is the most influential modes of perception of the social universe. Co-determinism refers to the works of well-known social scientists such as M. Archer (1982, 1995, 2000a, 2000b, 2003), R. Bhaskar (1998), P. Berger and T. Luckmann (1967), P. Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 1990a, 1990b), A. Giddens (1979, 1984, 1986, 1990, 1993), C.W Mills [1959] 2000, and N. Mouzelis (1989, 1993, 1995, 2000). See Francois Depelteau, 2008.

⁴¹ Birgitte Possing, “The Historical Biography: Genre, History and Methodology,” in *Writing Lives in Sport. Biographies, Life-histories and Methods*, ed. John Bale, Mette K. Christensen, Gertrud Phister (Aarhus University Press, 2004), 17-25. This is a common approach and one can mention a typical examples in Ethiopian history. See Harold Marcus, *The Life and Times of Emperor Menelik -1913*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975)

⁴² Birgitte Possing, “The Historical..”:19; Tosh, 114.

⁴³ Marwick, 165.

consisted of funeral speeches and inscriptions, usually praising the life and example of the deceased.”⁴⁴ Essentially biography is a universal practice for “all early societies and civilizations [in most part of the world] have sought to record themselves through the memorialisation of distinct evolutionary biography of individuals, often in poems and songs which were handed down from generation to generation.”⁴⁵ Biographical literature in any of its forms and focuses survives in many societies as part and parcel of their cultural practices. For instance, “ancestor worship, bloodlines, and other modes of tribute paid to past members of a society have thus characterized all ancient cultures. The ‘commemorative instinct,’ as biographical historians call it, seems to be a powerful concomitant to genealogy: a psychological...drive.”⁴⁶

Didactic in its purpose, certainly as many are in this age, Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives* seems to have been the first biographical literature at least in the western world.⁴⁷ In the Eastern world, particularly in China, Sima Qian developed a biographical form known as *Shiji* (145 -85 BC) that includes life accounts of important personalities in politics, military, religion and even assassins, too. Liu Xiang, a literary historian whose work *Lienü zhuan* (78-79 BC) shows that “female personalities in China were already at this stage considered worthy of biographical studies.”⁴⁸

In the western world, after Plutarch’s work, of course, following the collapse of the Roman Empire and the triumph of Christian Byzantine, religious themes dominated the narratives of human life both in the west and the east for millennia and half. During this period, the four biographical depictions of Jesus Christ, “with its stories of miracles, pain, and redemption, proved all-conquering. Moreover, stories of apostles, martyrs, and saints, reverently

⁴⁴ “Biography”, in *New Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 2, 15th ed. (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc, 1986), 222a.

⁴⁵ Hamilton, 9.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁴⁸ Possing, 3.

embellished, added further luster to the Christian epic.”⁴⁹ Religion and religious experiences being the central themes of these biographical literature, “tens, hundreds, and eventually thousands of new names, categorized as hagiographical works, would be added to the Christian biographical canon.”⁵⁰ The same spiritual themes and tone dominated biographical works in the Islamic world too. Especially, stories of an individual effort to study religious narratives (*hadith*) as well as a conviction for praying and fasting characterize biographies and biographical dictionaries.⁵¹

Until the emergence of modern biography in late eighteenth century which is most often indebted to James Boswell (1740-1795) as he wrote *The Life of Samuel Johnson*,⁵² the prevalent theme of biography is mainly limited to spiritual issues. The term ‘biography’ which is used to describe a specific work of written life depiction, had already become fashionable in the 17th century first used in English in an anonymous life of Thomas Fuller in 1661 as well as in an anonymous ‘biography’ of Oliver Cromwell in 1663.⁵³ However, “it was the dramatist John Dryden who, in 1683, first referred to ‘biography’ as a collective noun. Dryden was describing Plutarch’s *Lives*, which he had translated into English, and in so doing referred to the field of ‘biography’ as the ‘history of particular men’s lives’.”⁵⁴

Since the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, nonetheless, biography has been dominated by the life of individuals who were “products and agents of social change, of urban and imperial

⁴⁹ Hamilton, 41.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 47, 52.

⁵¹ John A. Nawas, “Biography and Biographical Works” in *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Josef W. Meri, Vol 1 (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, LLC, 2006), 110-111.

⁵² Leon Edel, 1959.

⁵³ Donald A. Stauffer, *English Biography before 1700* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930), 219. Quoted in Hamilton, 80.

⁵⁴ Hamilton, 81.

life: in short, of modernity.”⁵⁵ All features about modernity considered, in biographical literature, modernity is reflected in two ways: “an insistence on a feeling of the separation and isolation of its subjects, and a belief that this feeling inheres in urban life.”⁵⁶ Interestingly, biography as a genre of historical writing obviously is congruent with individualism in the modern west. “With its glorification of the individual, a biographer usually focuses on his or her subject’s individuality, those aspects, attitudes, and abilities that separate the subject from the masses.”⁵⁷ Other scholars also support this view and argued that “the modern biography is above all a free-standing text, the narrative of an individual and of individuality self-contained in form as in subject.”⁵⁸ With the assumption that an individual in the western world is relatively free from societal attachments and influences, “modern western biographers often probe for explanations for life decisions and developments in the individual himself or herself by exploring the subject’s psyche.”⁵⁹ This tendency of modernity in biographical literature seems to have spread to the rest of the world along with ‘modernization’.⁶⁰

With the advent of ‘modernity’, the abundance of biographical works in most part of the world seems to have given rise to various sub-genres. “Concerning biography in the 19th century, Thomas Carlyle’s lectures *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (1841) have a paradigmatic position, claiming biography as a branch of history by virtue of employing similar

⁵⁵ Stella Tillyard, “Biography and Modernity: Some Thoughts on Origin” in *Writing Lives, Biography and Textuality, Identity and Representation in Early Modern England*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 33.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁵⁷ Schoppa, 28.

⁵⁸ Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker, “Introducing Lives” in Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (eds), *Writing Lives, Biography and Textuality, Identity and Representation in Early Modern England*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, 4.

⁵⁹ R. Keith Schoppa, and 31.

⁶⁰ For instance, “many of the public and private rituals of modern individualism became visible in India in the nineteenth century.” Like novel, autobiography and history, this well known Indian scholar on modernity argues, biography flourished in this period as a genre that helps express the modern self. See Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe, Post Colonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 34.

processes of research and scholarship.”⁶¹ Among exemplary works both in the 19th and 20th centuries, David Masson’s *Life of Milton: Narrated in Connection with the Political, Ecclesiastical, and Literary History of his Time* (7 vol. 1859-94)⁶² and Lytton Strachey’s *Eminent Victorians* (1918)⁶³ are noteworthy.

As writing lives depended more on scientific research methods as the rest of historical studies, eventually, the literary aspect of writing lives that once used to define what biography itself is turned out to be only one among other kinds. Though biographies are difficult to classify because one kind easily shade into another, based on their perceptible emphasis, however, one can classify biographies as historical biographies, popular biographies, political biographies, fictional biographies, literary biographies and reference biographies. Especially, with the increase in biographical literature, first, the Western World-and later, the rest of the world have “produced increasing numbers of compilations of biographical facts concerning both the living and the dead” in the form of biographical dictionaries which consequently “stand apart from literature”, such as the *Dictionary of National Biography* in Britain and the *Dictionary of American Biography* in the United States.⁶⁴

In Africa, a biography of an individual is as old as oral tradition itself. Personal stories, especially about “culture heroes who are credited with the creation of whole social systems or

⁶¹ Possing, 3.

⁶² This seven volume work was not the first on Milton. Much earlier, some five authors produced, edited or compiled some aspects of his lives as well as the source materials for his biographies. See Thomas N. Corns, “The Early Lives of John Milton” in *Writing Lives, Biography and Textuality, Identity and Representation in Early Modern England*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 75.

⁶³ Hamilton, 149.

⁶⁴ Kendall, 188.

cultures”⁶⁵ are good examples. In these accounts on individuals, clearly, culture heroes are depicted as active agents of history. Jan Vansina explains:

In many, usually somewhat complex societies, historical causation is perceived as more complex....History is seen as a series of static states in which new items appear, but these are unconnected to each other. Each new appearance or invention is merely apportioned to a culture here.

For it is another feature of the nature of causation as seen in oral societies that individuals are responsible for change. They create. New techniques, institutions, and activities “appear” to them. So history becomes a sequence of greater or lesser culture heroes.”⁶⁶

Unlike narratives of individual lives in oral tradition among many African societies, biography in modern historical studies has never drawn the attention it deserves until recently. This is mainly because “as Africanists generally have struggled with neo-Marxist and post-modern paradigms, their emphasis has been either on the structural or subjective aspects of society rather than on individuals themselves.”⁶⁷ However, there has been notable academic endeavor to consider writing lives, for instance, in the form of reference biography in 1970s.⁶⁸

1.3. An Overview of Biographical Works in Ethiopia

When I come to the brief assessment of biographical literature in Ethiopia, it is important to emphasise that biographical accounts have a long history of learned practice. Biographical literature here includes chronicles, hagiographic materials, biographical dictionaries, life accounts appeared in encyclopedia and, most importantly, critical biographies. Like the biographical genres overviewd in the above lines, in Ethiopian studies the “biographical

⁶⁵Jan Vansina, 106.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 131.

⁶⁷Woods, 135.

⁶⁸*The Encyclopaedia Africana: Dictionary of African Biography*, Vol I (New York: Reference Publications Inc, 1977).

approach has continued to exercise its influence on more recent and professional historical reconstructions as well.”⁶⁹

In the following two sections of the chapter, I will attempt to provide a brief survey of critical biographical literature as well as any work that made note of Yīlma Déréssa. The first task, giving due emphasize to the individual life experience, will attempt to consider the role of an individual in history. Furthermore, the overview on major works under the organizing genre of biography in historical studies helps to provide a strong argument on the value of biography especially as an approach to illuminate structural themes. The next section, focusing mainly on empirical aspects of the works in relation to Yīlma Déréssa, summon up what have been written in the literature on the subject of the study. These two serve as point of reference for the study dealing with the major historiographic and methodological issues. They also contribute to investigate further the private and public life of Yīlma Déréssa with new insights and fresh data.

Employing the classifications given by Paul Murray Kendall, a biography of Yīlma Déréssa can be considered methodologically as critical biography.⁷⁰ In this respect, the study is not the first of its kind. In the last five decades, not few critical biographical studies have been produced on the life, times and works of Ethiopians. In their thematic focus mainly and their approach to some extent, I argue, the critical biographies to be overviewed here under share similarities with a life account of Yīlma Déréssa in this study. Closer at the former ‘institutional home of Ethiopian

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ According to Paul Murray Kendall(2005)there are about six kinds of biographical categories. These are informative biography, critical biography, standard biography, Interpretative biography, fictionalized biography and Special purpose biography. Critical biography, unlike the other, utilizing historical method, “does offer a genuine presentation of life. Critical biographies are very carefully researched; sources and ‘justifications’ are scrupulously set forth in notes, appendices, bibliographies; inferences and conjecture, when used, are duly labeled as such; no fictional devices or manipulations of materials are permitted, and the life is generally developed in straight chronological order.” See Paul Murray Kendall, 2005, 188b-189b. Because auto-biographical accounts do not employ data collection methods like critical biographical studies, they fall into different categories as far as the nature of historical research is concerned. Thus, in this dissertation, I do not treat autobiographical accounts, memoirs and reminiscences.

historiography'⁷¹ too, biographical studies have preoccupied student researchers at the Department of History of Addis Ababa University. "A good number of the biographical essays belong to the 1970s."⁷² There is also considerable attempt to produce a literary biography at the Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature. These works are entirely produced in partial fulfillments for the Bachelor of Arts in History and in Ethiopian Languages and Literature. The values of these senior essays are unquestionable. One can see their importance as they serve as important input in other research outputs. For the obvious reason of limited scope of the chapter, I do not assess these senior essays.

Before I attempt to provide a brief assessment of the critical biographies, a few words on the chronicles, hagiographical literature, biographical dictionaries and encyclopedic entries of life accounts is in order. Because royal chronicles and hagiographies mainly deal with the life and works of the protagonists, they are examples of biographical literature. "Chronicles of emperors are crucial for their factual detail and their strong chronological framework."⁷³ In his remark on the methodological values of chronologies for the Ethiopian history of 19th century, Sven Rubenson writes that "for the possible motives behind the attitudes and actions of the Ethiopian rulers, chronicles are very important supplementary sources. About the events on the Ethiopian side of campaign and battles, they are in many cases our only sources, and in other cases they provide opportunities to check European secondary sources."⁷⁴ Yet, they are plausibly criticized for "their decidedly political and religious bias, their predilection for supernatural explanation of

⁷¹ Bahru Zewde, "A Century of Ethiopian Historiography" *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 33, No 2(November 2000).8.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Bahru Zewde, "Heruy's Ya-Heywot Tarik and Mahtama Sellase's Che Balaw: Two Perceptions of a Biographical Dictionary" in Bahru Zewde, *Society, State and History*, Selected Essays (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2008), 1. In order to simplify the problem of pagination that I face due to some difficulties in accessing the original publication of this article, I totally rely on the date and pages of its second publication.

⁷⁴ Sven Rubenson, *Survival of Ethiopian Independence* (Addis Ababa: Kuraz Publishing Agency Press,1991). 21.

historical phenomena and their aversion to quantification.”⁷⁵ Similar to chronicles in its content as well as form, *Tarikä Nägäst*, a compiled narrative on the biographical accounts of the emperors is also another exemplary work in the 18th century.⁷⁶

Another Ethiopian practice of history writing that deals with biographical account is the hagiographical tradition. The literary traditions of the Ethiopian Church consist of two major categories. According to Tadesse Tamrat, the first group consists of foreign translated narratives such as the Acts of Martyrs (*Gädilä Säma’itat*), Acts of Saints (*Gädlä Şadqan*) and readings of the Ethiopian Calendar (*Sinkisar*). *Gädil* belongs to the second category and it includes relatively the large collections of hagiographical traditions about medieval Ethiopian saints.⁷⁷ “*Gädil* literally means ‘contending,[spiritual] struggle’ but also comprises the meaning of ‘vita’, biography[of a person]. *Gädil* is the most popular genre of Ethiopian hagiography, which is in turn, one of the most important constituents of *Gi’iz* literature.”⁷⁸ The writers of the *Gädl* did not produce biographies in the historical sense of that term, and their works could be better understood as ‘hagiographical’ works. They aimed at elevating both the saint and his monastery.⁷⁹ Hence, their importance as biographical study is by inference.

New trends in biographical literature appeared beginning from the turn of the twentieth century. “Since the introduction of printing in Ethiopia, it has become traditional for families to publish life histories of their deceased on the occasion of the commemoration of the death held on the

⁷⁵ Bahru, “Heruy’s Ya-Heywot...”, 1.

⁷⁶ Täklä Şadiq Mäkuria, *Tarik ä Nägästäna Däğazmaç Hailu İşäté Bā Zāmānā Mäsafint Wist*, mimeograph, 1976. E.C. IES.MS.15077.

⁷⁷ Tadesse Tamrat, “Hagiographies and the Reconstruction for the Medieval Ethiopian history” A Paper Prepared for the Conference on Research Trends in Ethiopian History” 1970: 2-3.

⁷⁸ Steven Kaplan, “Gädl” in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 2 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 642a.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

fortieth day, and obituaries have also appeared in the Ethiopian press.”⁸⁰ Before scholars entertained biographical study as professional historiography, there was an exemplary endeavor at the beginning of the twentieth century too(Hiruy Wäldä-Sillassé Yä *Hiywot Tarik* 1915EC). Mahtämä-Sillassé Wäldä-Mäsqäl also made a similar attempt to prepare a better dictionary of biography in Amharic in 1961 E.C.(*Čé Bäläw*). Bahru (1996) examined these biographical compilations duly and argued.

*Without the advantage of the advanced organizational skills of modern higher education, they have managed to produce works of reference which have proved handy companions for students of Ethiopian history. In particular, the full name reference as well as the details of chronology and family relationships which Čé Bäläw almost invariably offers has been of considerable help, and at times indispensable, in historical research. While Yä-Hiywät Tarik often lacks these details, it partially compensates for it by the relative freedom and detachment with which it portrays its characters.*⁸¹

Though in later period, biographical dictionaries are also developed in English in 1970s. Preceded by a historical introduction to each country’s series of biography, *The Encyclopaedia Africana: Dictionary of African Biography* (1977) has 155 biographical entries for Ethiopian section in its publication of volume one. About 87% of the entries are allocated to Ethiopians and the rest for foreigners whose life was associated with the country. In terms of period, *The Encyclopaedia Africana* has more entries for personalities who lived in the 19th and 20th

⁸⁰ Belainesh Michael, S. Chojnacki and Richard Pankhurst (eds). *The Dictionary of Ethiopian Biography: Vol 1 From Early Times to the End of the Zagwe Dynasty c. 1270 A.D.* (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1975), i.

⁸¹ Bahru, “Heruy’s Ya-Hiywot....”, 12.

centuries than other times. We have only nine biographical accounts of women. Neither Yïlma Déréssa nor his father *Bilata Déréssa Amänté* was included.⁸²

The need for a work devoted to Ethiopian biography became clear when the editors of *The Encyclopaedia Africana* approached scholars at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies in 1963 and requested them to assist in obtaining and compiling encyclopedic entries relating to Ethiopian personalities.⁸³ Consequently, out of the collected, registered and collated 2650 entries, 500 biographical accounts are published in 1975 as the first volume *The Dictionary of Ethiopian Biography*. Rather than following an alphabetical order, this compilation is arranged chronologically and the volume covered the period up to 1270. The editors were aware of the shortcomings of *The Dictionary* as they pointed out that, “because of the limited historical sources available for the early period covered in the volume, the majority of the entries are devoted to kings, religious leaders, warriors and other personalities who appear on coins, inscriptions and in manuscripts.”⁸⁴

Probably the most voluminous publication in allocating substantial coverage for biographical accounts in Ethiopian studies in general and Ethiopian history in particular is *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*.⁸⁵ Out of the total 4,872 entries, about 1650 (more than 33%) directly deal with the biography of prominent personalities in Ethiopia and the rest of the Horn of Africa. Of the total biographical accounts, women’s life history constitute only 3 % (62). Seen from geographical

⁸² The first volume consists of biographical accounts of personalities who are associated with Ethiopia and Ghana. See *The Encyclopaedia Africana: Dictionary of African Biography*, Vol I, (New York: Reference Publications Inc. 1977).

⁸³ Belainesh Michael, S. Chojnacki and Richard Pankhurst (eds), 1975.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Currently, all the five volumes are published; they give remarkable service to the scholars of humanities, social sciences and the general readers. The first four volumes are edited by Seigbert Uhlig and the last one Alessandro Bausi together with Uhlig. *Encyclopedia Aethiopica* Volume One covers entries from A-C (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003); Volume Two from D-Ha (2005); Volume Three from He-N (2007); Volume Four from O-X (2010) and Voume Five from Y-Z and Addenda with index (2014).

point of view, about 630 biographical entries discuss individuals whose origin is beyond the horn of Africa. In this alphabetically arranged publication, the biography of Yīlma Déréssa has been included in the last volume.⁸⁶ Undoubtedly, the abundance of biographical entries in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica* in all volumes shows, the central position that personal narratives occupy in historical study in Ethiopia. It is a comprehensible conclusion that “explicitly or implicitly biographies have dominated Ethiopian historiography. Until very recently, Ethiopian history has been almost exclusively the history of the elite. As such, the reconstruction of historical events has revolved around the careers of prominent individuals.”⁸⁷

Among critical biographical literature, Yohannīs Admasu’s *Yoftahé Nigusé: Yä’Hirwätuna Yä’suhufu Tarik* (*‘Yoftahe Niguse: A History of His Life and Literary Works’*) (2005 E.C.) is an important study in Amharic. Yohannīs exerted great effort employing rigorous research and excellent literary competence. Written in Amharic and accessible to the general public, however, some readers would face problems as a result of peculiar Amharic vocabularies and Gī’iz expressions.⁸⁸

Täklä Şadiq Mäkuria’s trilogy under the title *Aşé Tewodros İna Yä’Itiopia Andinät* (1981 EC), *Aşé Yohannes İna Yä’Itiopia Andinät* (1982 EC) and *Aşé Menilik İna Yä’Itiopia Andinät* (1983 EC) are well known monographs especially among the general readers and the academia.⁸⁹ As one of the most prolific writer’s of Ethiopian history in native language (Amharic), Täklä Şadiq has published the above mentioned quasi-biographical studies in the last years of the

⁸⁶ Paulos Milkias, “Yīlma Deressa” in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica* eds. Alessandro Bausi and Seigbert Uhlig, Vol. 5, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014), 46b-48a.

⁸⁷ Bahru, “Heruy’s Ya-Heywot Tarik....”, 1.

⁸⁸ See the glossary part of the book from page 304 to 321. Yohannes Admasu *Yoftahe Niguse: Yä’Hirwotuna Yä’suhufu Tarik* (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2005 E.C.)

⁸⁹ Täklä Şadiq Mäkuria, *Aşé Tewodros İna Yä’Itiopia Andinät* (Addis Ababa: Kuraz Publishing House, 1981 EC); *Aşé Yohannes İna Yä’Itiopia Andinät* (Addis Ababa: Kuraz Publishing House, 1982 E.C.) and *Aşé Menilik İna Yä’Itiopia Andinät* (Addis Ababa: Kuraz Publishing House, 1983 E.C.).

Military Government of Ethiopia. Though methodologically well-versed, Täklä Şadiq Mäkuria's biographic works tilted most often towards a political agenda-unity of the nation. Therefore, "pragmatism has characterized most of Täklä Şadi's works."⁹⁰ Zewde Reta's *Täferi Mekonin: Rägimu Yä'siltan Guzo: 1884-1922* has the biographical data of Emperor Haile Sellassie from his birth in 1892 to his coronation in 1930. Despite the fact that Zewde Reta's book is credible for its details both in facts and pictures, it is not written in scholarly manner and the author could not help but discuss the subject in a highly journalistic account.⁹¹

Among biographical literature on Ethiopian personalities that are written in English, Leonard Mosley's *Haile Selassie: The Conquering Lion* is probably the earliest work.⁹² Published in 1964 when the power of the Emperor was at its apogee, Mosley attempted to give the dramatic life of the sovereign from his childhood till his return from exile in 1941. Though valuable, Mosley's sympathy to the Emperor seems to force him to defend various aspects of the Emperor's personality from sincere critics.⁹³

Sven Rubenson's *King of Kings Tewodros of Ethiopia* (1966) seems to be a pioneer critical biographical work of its kind in Ethiopia.⁹⁴ Rubenson seeks to answer several questions in this work: who was Tewodros? Where he came from; how did he reach the position of King of Kings of Ethiopia; why the events of his reign took the course they did; what forces worked on him; to what extent he shaped his own fate. The study is worth mentioning in the genre of biography in Ethiopian context in the sense that its approach to understand first Kasa and later

⁹⁰ Bahru, "A Century of...". 7. Informant: Fikrä Sillassé Wägdäräs (Captain).

⁹¹ Zäwde Reta, *Täferi Mäkonin: Rägimu Yä'siltan Guzo: Bä'Minilik, Bä'Iyasuna Bä'Zäwditu Zämän, 1884-1922* (Addis Ababa: Central Printing House, 1998 E.C.), 42, 62, 68, 200 and 239.

⁹² L. Mosley, *Haile Selassie, the Conquering Lion* (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1965)

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 286-294.

⁹⁴ Sven Rubenson, *King of Kings Tewodros of Ethiopia*, (Addis Ababa: Haile Sellassei University, 1966)

Emperor Tewodros II beginning from his family and socio-political background to his ambitious schemes that led to the quarrel with his subjects and the British government is successful. Yet, given the historical context of *Zämänä Masafint*, Kassa's deep motives for his exceptional goals do not seem to get proper attention in this biographical study.⁹⁵ Otherwise, Rubenson's *King of Kings* is an exemplary biographical study.

Kofi Darkwah has studied the biography of Menelik II in his book under the title *Shewa, Menilek and the Ethiopian Empire 1813-1889*, as expected, against the backdrop of the political developments in the region.⁹⁶ The scholarly work of Darkwah can be credited for its elaborate historical setting and for its treatment of internal circumstances in the period under discussion. Probably, the major drawback of Darkwah's work is its omission of İtégé Taytu's role both in the political and the private life of Emperor Mīnilik II.

Focusing on the life of the same ruler, Harold Marcus's *The Life and Times of Menelik II* is a commendable biographical book on relatively much studied historical agent of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Ethiopia.⁹⁷ Though Marcus clearly states that the book cannot be considered as "a critical biography due to paucity of the available data at his disposal", he offered instead a biography in "the Life and Times tradition, with the 'times' occasionally taking center stage."⁹⁸ This work clearly discusses significant and dynamic public as well as private experiences of Emperor Mīnilik II from his birth to his death. Given the eventful nature of the period (with eventual political developments), Marcus assesses the life of Mīnilik II from

⁹⁵ Merid Waldaragay, "Yä Tewodros Alamawoch Käyet Endemenchu" in *Kasa and Kasa Papers on the Lives, Times and Images of Tewodros II and Yohannes IV*, eds. Taddese Beyene, Richard Pankhurst and Shiferaw Bekele (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1990), 69-117.

⁹⁶ Darkwah, Kofi. *Shewa, Menilek and the Ethiopian Empire 1813-1889* (London: Heinemann, 1975).

⁹⁷ Harold Marcus, *The Life and Times of Menelik II Ethiopia 1844-1913* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, viii.

both internal and external perspectives. Cognizant of the fact that there are limited historical sources from the side of Mīnilik II's dignitaries, I am, nonetheless, convinced that the work does not adequately discuss Menelik's life experiences with his subordinates. The recent publication of Pawlos Nōño's manuscript collections, for instance, from Emperor Mīnilik II's letters that the Emperor used to exchange with his local rulers and subjects elucidates another aspect of the life and times of Mīnilik II.⁹⁹ Mīnilik's letters also appear in the work of Alessandro Truizli and Tesema Ta'a (1996 E.C.).¹⁰⁰

As a scholar of Ethiopian history, Harold Marcus has also written another biographical book with the title of *Haile Sellassie I: The Formative Years 1892-1936*.¹⁰¹ In this study, Marcus narrates mostly the public aspect of the life of Tāfāri Mākonnin from his childhood to the year of his exile as a result of the Italian invasion. This work is of immense importance as far as the political biography of Hailā Sīllassé is concerned. Hence, not to demean its essential contribution to Ethiopian historiography, *Haile Sellassie I: The Formative Years 1892-1936*, for instance, does not mention the place of Tāfāri's marriage with Mānān Asfaw which Līg Iyasu prearranged while it deserves fair discussion.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Pawlos Nōño. *Aṣé Mīnilik Bā'Agār Wist Yä'tāṣaṣafu'ačāw Dābdabéwoč* (Addis Ababa:Aster Nega Publishing Enterprise, 2003 E.C.).

¹⁰⁰ Alessandro Truizli and Tesema Ta'a, *Yä'wälläga Yätarik Sünadoč:Kä 1880woču İskä 1920 woču* (G.C), (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 1996 E.C.)

¹⁰¹ Acknowledging his scholarly inclination that emphasizes the role of individuals and prominent personalities in history, a group of scholars have dedicated an anthology to Marcus. See Tim Carmikael et al eds., *Personality and Political Culture in Modern Africa*(Boston:Boston University, 1998). The editors noted that Marcus is prominent among those scholars who have emphasized the role of African leaders in shaping the transformation of diplomatic and political destinies. His studies of the Ethiopian emperors Menilek II and Haile Selassie I, in particular, situate powerful individuals within their national and international historical contexts, and argue persuasively that personality is a crucial element in understanding political culture.

¹⁰² Though amplified first and most in feminist discourse, in biographical studies too, 'the personal is the political'. Leckie, 3-4.; İmīru Hailā-Sīllassé, *Ka'yāhut Kāmastawīsāw*(Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2002 E.C.)

Another work that aims at giving biographical information on the ill-fated emperor of Ethiopia at the last quarter of the 19th century is Zewde Gebre Sillassei's *Yohannes IV of Ethiopia: A Political Biography*. Zewde provides an overview of significant political experiences of Yohannes' internal and external affairs utilizing mostly foreign sources. In this regard, Zewde's book is credited for its details and originality. However, in this political biography, he concentrates on the circumstances and side stories of Yohannes' life rather than his subject's public life as historical agent. It is only in chapter 10 and in the conclusion part of the study that Zewde attempts to give the biographical sketch of Emperor Yohannes IV. Indeed, "no biography is complete unless it reveals the individual within history, within an ethos and a social complex."¹⁰³ However, in life-writing, it is an individual, as historical agent, that is supposed to take the center stage.

Haggai Enrich's work with a long title and subtitle to his biographical research outcome as *Ras Alula and the Scramble for Africa A Political Biography: Ethiopia and Eritrea 1875-1897* clearly illustrated every feature (including the marital aspect) of the magnificent political career of a reputable general of humble origin.¹⁰⁴ He also has tried to provide his reader with the impressions of Ras Alula among contemporary Ethiopian and Eritrean politicians. In doing so, he has indicated the historical significance of his study subject.

Initially written in Italian and published in 1995 and translated into English by Antony Shugaar in 2012, Angelo Del Boca's *The Negus: The Life and Death of the Last King of Kings* presents

¹⁰³ Edel, 4.

¹⁰⁴ Haggai Erlich, *Ras Alula and the Scramble for Africa A Political Biography: Ethiopia and Eritrea 1875-1897* (New Jersey: The Red Sea Press, 1996).

an analysis of the biography of Emperor Hailä Sillassé I.¹⁰⁵ Unlike the other learned accounts on the Emperor, Del Boca gives us the detailed public and private lives of the king especially those that have not been addressed so far. His interviews with the emperor and his consultation of valuable state and individual documents from Ethiopian and foreign archives in various languages seem to have enabled Del Boca to produce this original biographical work. However, while the author devotes considerable space to the relation between the emperor and his opponents, he declines to discuss, for instance, the hostile interaction between the sovereign and the radical college students.¹⁰⁶

Peter Garretson's work on the life and times of *Hakim Wärkinäh Īšäté* (Dr. Martin) is a profound biographical work. It illuminates especially the inner self of the study subject both at the private and public arenas. The author makes use of the diary of *Hakim Wärkinäh* effectively which is extremely important not only for its detail and precise information on the period but also in capturing the motives, intentions, emotions, and behaviors of Dr. Martin.¹⁰⁷ This monograph is also important for my study as it sheds light on some stories about Yīlma Déréssa.¹⁰⁸

At least three collective biographical works need a brief appraisal before I wind up my brief survey of critical biographies in Ethiopia and begin to examine the existing literature that specifically refer to my study subject. These are Chris Prouty (1986), Taddese Beyene, Richard Pankhurst, Shiferaw Bekele (1990) and Brian James Yates (2009). Though Chris Prouty attempts to delve into the private and public lives of the most powerful couples of their time in her

¹⁰⁵ Angelo Del Boca, *The Negus: The Life and Death of the Last King of Kings* (Addis Ababa: Arada Books, 2012).

¹⁰⁶ Randi Ronning Balsvik, *Haile-Selassie's Students: The Intellectual and Social Background to Revolution 1952-1977* (Michigan: Michigan State University, 1985); Nega Ayele and John Markakis, *Class and Revolution in Ethiopia* (New Jersey: The Red Sea Press, 1986).

¹⁰⁷ Peter Garretson, *A Victorian Gentleman and Ethiopian Nationalist: The Life and Times of Hakim Wärkinäh, Dr. Charles Martin* (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2012).

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 255, 280, 282-283, 287, 289-290, and 292-294.

thorough study entitled *Empress Taytu and Menilek II Ethiopia 1883-1910*, she followed a biographical approach in her discussions of the life of both Taytu and Mīnilik II. This study, like similar other academic endeavors on the personalities of the period, was highly dependent on foreign sources. Prouty's work also takes most often sensational form. Furthermore, the perspective from which Taytu and Mīnilik II are depicted is a result of interactions with foreigners (hence, sources are overwhelmingly foreign) which lack the internal profile of the study subjects.

An anthology, *Kasa and Kasa: Papers on the Lives, Times and Images of Tewodros II and Yohannes IV(1855-1889)*, consisting of chapters both in Amharic and English, deals mainly with the public lives of the two emperors.¹⁰⁹ In this collection, various themes such as politics, war, heritage, fine arts, literature, language and issues of boundary are treated in connection with the individual lives of these rulers. Despite the fact that the scope of *Kasa and Kasa* is limited to issues under the period of the kingship of the two individuals, it is an insightful contribution especially to studies that focus on the historical themes in politics and culture (arts).¹¹⁰

Another work that analyzes the individual roles of some distinguished Ethiopian personalities in the last quarter of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century is Brian James Yates' "Invisible Actors: The Oromo and the Creation of Modern Ethiopia (1855-1913)". In Yates PhD thesis, especially *Ras Gobāna Daçi*, *Ras Mikael Ali*, *Fitawrari Habtä Giorgis Dinägdé* and *Lǧ Iyasu Mikael* take the center stage in these biographical narratives. Though Yates has limited the Oromo personalities whose origins were in Wallo and Shawa and his period covers only the time

¹⁰⁹ Shiferaw Bekele, Taddese Beyene, Richard Pankhurt, eds., *Kasa and Kasa: Papers on the Lives, Times and Images of Tewodros II and Yohannes IV(1855-1889)*(Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1990).

¹¹⁰ In this biographical study, folklore both as a concept and as a method (oral tradition) is utilized in an attempt to shed light on the private and public lives of Yīlma Déréssa.

of modern Ethiopian state formation for the obvious reason of scope, the work has contributed significantly to the delicate political and epistemological debate on the question of ethnicity in historical perspective. In my study, I have addressed issues related to the social identities of Yilma Déréssa that is emphatically pointed out in some of his writings and the folktales about him.¹¹¹

1.4. Review of Related Literature on Yilma Déréssa

No wonder that as studies on the imperial government of Ethiopia are many and various, references to Yilma Déréssa, like in the case of some other statesmen in the twentieth century, are diverse. No matter how prominent he had been, in almost all works, he is mentioned in passing references.¹¹² Besides academic works, in their respective autobiographies, reminiscences and memoirs, some individuals refer to Yilma Déréssa on a range of issues.¹¹³

¹¹¹See Christopher Clapham, *Haile-Selassie's Government* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1969); Ezkiel Gäbissa, "The Italian Invasion, the Ethiopian Empire, and Oromo Nationalism: The Significance of the Western Oromo Confederation of 1936", *Northeast African Studies*, New Series, 9, No. 3, Special Issue: The Oromo in Ethiopian Studies: Confronting Challenges to Politically Engaged Scholarship (2002): 75-96.

¹¹²Ladislav Farago, *Abyssinia on the Eve* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1935); Richard Greenfield, *Ethiopia: A New Political History* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1965); Margery Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969); John Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of A Traditional Polity*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974; Befekadu Degefe, "The Making of the Ethiopian National Currency: 1941-1945," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 26, No. 2, (1993):23-51; Balsvik Randi Ronni, *Haile-Selasseis Students: The Intellectual and Social Background to Revolution 1952-1977* (East Lansing: 1985); Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia 1855-1991*. 2nd ed.(Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2002); Bahru Zewde, *Pioneers of Change in Ethiopia: The Reformist Intellectuals of the Early Twentieth Century* (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2002); Fikru Gebrekidan, "Pan-African Dialectics: Ethiopia, Africa, and the African Diaspora, 1941- 74" in *Personality and Political Culture in Modern Africa*, ed. Tim Carmichael et al. (Boston: Boston University, 1998); Andargachaw Asägüd, *Bä' Acir Yätäqäcä Räjim Guzo: Mälson Bä' Itiopia Hizb Tigil Wist* (Addis Ababa: Central Printing Press, 1992 E.C.); Ezkiel Gäbissa, "The Italian Invasion, the Ethiopian Empire, and Oromo Nationalism: The Significance of the Western Oromo Confederation of 1936," *Northeast African Studies*, New Series, 9, No. 3, Special Issue: The Oromo in Ethiopian Studies: Confronting Challenges to Politically Engaged Scholarship (2002): 75-96.

¹¹³ These include, among others, John Spencer. *Ethiopia at Bay: A Personal Account of Haile Selassie Years*, Reference Publications, Michigan, 1987; Bulcha Demeksa. *My Life My Vision for the Oromo and Other Peoples of Ethiopia*, New Jersey: The Red Sea Press, 2013; Emmanuel Abraham, *Reminiscences of My Life*, New Jersey: The Red Sea Press, 2011; Taffara Deguefä, *Minutes of An Ethiopian Century* (Addis Ababa: Shama Books, 2006); Märsi'ä Hazän Wäldä Qirqos. *Tiztayé Silä Rasé Yämastawisaw 1891-1923* (Addis Ababa: Aster Nega

Interestingly enough, knowledge about him is not limited to written texts. Probably more than any statesman in modern Ethiopia to date, he is quite popular in the folktale.¹¹⁴ I begin my survey with the former one.

Among these publications, probably the first one which tells us about Yīlma Déréssa is the work of Ladislav Farago (1935). By and large, Farago's assessment about the personality of Yīlma Déréssa is impressionistic. Otherwise, the book is valuable for the data in relation to the general perception of my study subject towards the country and the role of the educated youth.¹¹⁵ After three decades since Farago's book saw the light of publication, Richard Greenfield, not a historian by profession, focuses on the social background, education and the influence that Yīlma Déréssa had had on the Imperial Government of Ethiopia.¹¹⁶ Similarly, Margery Perham has mentioned Yīlma more or less in a similar manner in her book *The Government of Ethiopia*.¹¹⁷ Cognizant of the fact that the purposes of these books are not to conduct an in-depth analysis of Yīlma's biographical account, I would like to underscore that the information is very insufficient and one sided.

Another work probably that has relatively more detailed biographical data than other studies is Christopher Clapham's *Haile Selassie's Government*.¹¹⁸ In the immediate aftermath of the publication of this book, interestingly, an anonymous writer seems to have sent a confidential letter to Ato Yīlma that dealt with the latter's representation in the book.¹¹⁹ Compared to the

Publishing Enterprise, 2000 E.C.); Hadis Alāmayāhu, *Tizita* (Addis Ababa: Kuraz Publishing Enterprise, 1985 E.C.), Seyoum Haregot, *The Bureaucratic Empire Serving Emperor Haile Silasse* (New Jersey: The Red Sea Press, 2013) and Tāklā Ṣadiq Mākuriā, *Yä 'Hiywät Tariké*, (Addis Ababa: 2008 E.C.)

¹¹⁴ Bulcha, *My Life My...*, 68.

¹¹⁵ Farago, 38.

¹¹⁶ Greenfield, 101, 231, 236, 262, 281, 315 and 316.

¹¹⁷ Perham, 200.

¹¹⁸ Christopher Clapham (1969).

¹¹⁹ Confidential letter from an anonymous writer to Yīlma Déréssa 1969. In Sofya Yīlma's Possession.

works of Greenfield and Perham, *Clapham's* book has better profile of Yilma Déréssa. In the biographical appendix that Clapham compiled for important public officials of the government, he gives a précis of biographical data of my study subject. Throughout this book, Yilma is depicted as 'the most powerful minister' especially since 1960s. Though many of the remarks made on him are correct, due to absence of source citation, one may suspect the credibility of some statements, for example, on the alleged regional/ethnic sentiment of Yilma Déréssa and his preferences for Oromo officials.¹²⁰

In his scholarly analysis of the Ethiopian imperial government in a book under the title *Ethiopia: Anatomy of Traditional Polity*, John Markakis has given us the career of Yilma especially at the Ministry of Finance. In this regard, he is represented simply as an instrument of the Emperor at the Ministry.¹²¹ Yet, Markakis' focus on Yilma's professional and political handling of budget is an insightful examination in which an educated Ethiopian high-ranking official like he was carrying out his duties in the imperial period. However, Markakis deals with one facet of public life of Yilma mainly in the Ministry of Finance.

Besides his full and deputy ministerial positions since 1942, Yilma Déréssa had also served the state either as a member or as a chairperson of various boards at different institutions¹²² and he was a president of Board of Governors of Halä Sillase I University. In this regard, Randi

¹²⁰Clapham stated that "the [Oromo] tendency to combine is most clearly seen in the financial administration, where Yilma Déréssa has moved several of his fellow Wällägas into important posts, especially in the vital Budget Department of the Ministry of Finance; he has also employed [Oromo] in the Investment Bank and the provincial financial services, and he appears to have been trying to establish himself as an [Oromo] leader. This sort of position can be precarious, since it runs the danger of rousing suspicions of local separatism, as was shown when a [Oromo] breakaway movement late in 1966 proposed that Yilma himself become Prime Minister."79.

¹²¹ For example, Markakis characterized Yilma Déréssa as "the Emperor's *alter ego*" in the financial field. See Markakis, 353.

¹²² For instance he was appointed and worked as a vice president of the Board of the National Bank. Ministry of the Pen to Yilma Déréssa, Letter No. 1102-24-57, Mägabä 2, 1957 E.C. File No. Personal File of Yilma Déréssa, Head Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (Hereafter HO.MOFED).

Rønning Balsvik, in her *Haile Sellassie Students: The Intellectual and Social Background to the Revolution* mentions the experience of Yīlma as an official in charge of university affairs while student radicalism grew year after year.¹²³ Likewise, Befekadu Degefe pointed out the leading role that my study subject, as a member of currency board, has played in the struggle to issue new currency soon after Ethiopia's liberation from Fascist Italy.¹²⁴

Fikru Gebrekidan(1998) and Belete Belachew(2012) refer to Yīlma from the perspective of Pan-African discourse and the place of Ethiopia in African politics respectively. Andargachew Asāgīd(2000), in narrating the courses of the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution also pointed out that Yīlma was considered as one of the moderate government officials on the eve of the Revolution. Bahru(1991) too, in his renowned book on the general history of Ethiopia mentions Yīlma Déréssa in connection with the close relations between Ethiopia and the United State of America in the second half of twentieth century. Bahru (1991), again, might be credited most for the pages he has dedicated to Déréssa Amānté, the father of Yīlma Déréssa. In *Pioneers of Change in Ethiopia*, the author, even with few facts pertaining to the son, has duly explained essentially the intellectual activities of Bilatta Déréssa as a writer on *Birhanina Sālam* news paper.¹²⁵ This account is very crucial for it gives important data on the family background of my study subject without which the research can never be complete. However, since the major focus of my study is Yīlma Déréssa, the contribution of *Pioneers of Change in Ethiopia* whose initial purpose is in fact to show the intellectual history of early twentieth century Ethiopia is limited.

¹²³ Randi Rønning Balsvik(1985).

¹²⁴ Befekadu Degefe, "The Development of Money, Monetary Institutions, and Monetary Policy 1941-1975," in *An Economic History of Ethiopia, Vol. 1: The Imperial Era 1941-74*, ed. Shiferaw Bekele, (Dakar: Codesria, 1995), 232-276.

¹²⁵ Bahru, *Pioneers of Change*74-75.

In his study on the scheme to establish the “Western Galla [Oromo] Confederation”, Ezkiel Gabissa has underscored the principal role that Yilma had played as a delegate of Oromo traditional rulers to the British government official at Gore in May 1936.¹²⁶ Though Ezkiel cites some archival sources for his argument in the very involvement of Yilma as a leader among the six delegates of the Confederation, Paulos Milkias (2014) in his account on the biography of Yilma Déréssa as encyclopedic entry declines to mention the issue of the “Confederation”.¹²⁷ Like any other piece of writing, Ezkiel(2002) treats the involvement of Yilma Déréssa in the fruitless “Confederation” as passing reference.

Without doubt, given the major purpose of the above mentioned works, the scanty nature of the data on Yilma Déréssa is to be expected, except for some minor errors and biased representations.¹²⁸ Some writers err and have mistaken assumptions about Yilma partly because they incline to portray him only from a particular standpoint. But it is simplistic to represent an individual, including Yilma, in such manner. As Schoppa explains:

*Every person in every culture has multiple identities stemming from the various roles that he or she plays and the various relationships that he or she maintains. These identities come from oneself (emerging from personality, goals, abilities, lifestyle, particular incidents); from connections to others; and from others who choose for whatever reason to bestow a particular identity upon one.*¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Ezekiel Gebissa, “The Italian Invasion, the Ethiopian Empire, and Oromo Nationalism: The Significance of the Western Oromo Confederation of 1936” *Northeast African Studies*, New Series, 9, 3, Special Issue: The Oromo in Ethiopian Studies: Confronting Challenges to Politically Engaged Scholarship (2002), 75-96.

¹²⁷ Paulos Milkias, 47a.

¹²⁸ Richard Greenfield, for example, noted that “Moroda had two sons, Kumsa who became *däğazmač* Gebre Egziabher, and Amänté, who was his adopted son and was latter killed by an elephant.” See, 101. My informants at Gimbi, Näqämté and Addis Ababa, however, unanimously recount that Amänté was the adopted son of Bäkäré, not of Moräda. The latter was one of his brothers.

¹²⁹ Schoppa, 40.

That said, however, as these works discuss Yīlma Déréssa's public life (even if in passing reference), indeed among many other comparable personalities in the government, they are valuable for the reconstruction of his biography.

Though succinct as it has to be in such sorts of biographical dictionaries and encyclopedias, there are three publications in which a biographical account of Yīlma Déréssa is included as an entry.¹³⁰ Except one, which is published in Amharic, the other two are produced in English. The first one, *Tarikawi Māzgābā Sāb* (trans. "Historical Biography"), a compilation of the accounts of popular personalities in Amharic, consists of the public aspect of Yīlma Déréssa's life and has relatively nothing more than what has been published about the profile of my study subject, upon his reappointment as a Minister of Finance, on *Addis Zāmān* on Miazia 5, 1958 E.C. Hence, it is nearly a repetition of a formal life account published in the aforementioned news paper. Giving credit to its inclusiveness and reference to marital information, the biographical entry on Yīlma in Chris Prouty's and Eugene Rosenfeld's *Historical Dictionary of Ethiopia* too, with factual error with regard to his death, has scanty and sketchy account of Yīlma Déréssa.

Cognizant of the fact that any piece of writing in an encyclopedia is necessarily laconic one, Paulos Milkias' biographical account in volume five of *Encyclopedia Aethiopica* was actually a good starting point to study Yīlma Déréssa. Apart from presenting a few fresh facts, Paulos attempts to correlate the intellectual career of Yīlma (the publication of Ethiopian history book with his due coverage to Oromo expansion hitherto not discussed in a vernacular language) and

¹³⁰ *Historical Dictionary of Ethiopia: African Historical Dictionary, Series no 32*, 2nd eds., Chris Prouty and Eugene Rosenfeld Metuchen (New Jersey and London: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 1994); Fantahun Īngīda, *Tarikawi Māzgābā Sāb* (Addis Ababa: 2000 E.C.); Siegbert Uhlig and Alessandro Bausi, eds., *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, Vol 5, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015.

the arguable “pressure on the Emperor” from unspecified social group to retire Yilma from his key position of Ministry of Finance in 1968.¹³¹

Though not the fruits of an academic endeavor in a true sense of the term, the personal accounts of a number of individuals in the form of autobiographies, reminiscences and memoirs are important works as far as a biography of Yilma Déréssa is concerned. Especially personal accounts written by individuals who had either worked with Yilma Déréssa or simply have had an acquaintance with him are particularly important. John Spencer in his *Ethiopia at Bay: A Personal Account of Haile Selassie Years* comments especially on the skills that Yilma was endowed with. Spencer, in his personal account, attempted to give a relatively detailed information about the careers of Yilma Déréssa and its multifaceted nature.¹³²

Having written his memoir, *Tizita*, in retrospect, obviously, Haddis Alämayähu narrates especially his notable experience in which Yilma Déréssa was also involved during the Italian invasion. Haddis recorded in relative detail how Italian officials forced him and Yilma into exile from Addis Ababa via Eritrea to Ponza, Italy.¹³³ Emmanuel Abraham (2011), in his reminiscences too, mentioned Yilma Déréssa especially in connection with the Ethio-Italian relations in 1950s. There are also significant incidents that Emmanuel referred to Yilma Déréssa, while the latter was a Vice-Minister of Finance.¹³⁴ Like Emmanuel, Seyoum Haregot(2013), a high level functionary official of the Imperial government during its last decade or so, as well made note of Yilma Déréssa in his personal account. In addition to the well known facts about

¹³¹ Yilma Déréssa, *Yä Itiopia Tarik Bä'asra Sīdistāñaw Kīflā Zāmān* (Addis Ababa: Bīrhanīna Sālam Printing House, 1959. E.C.); Paulos, 47b.

¹³² Spencer, 14, 81, 105, 106, 120, 121, 122, 127, 157, 160, 301 and 326.

¹³³ Hadis, 200-228.

¹³⁴ Emmanuel, 89, 91, 93, 94, 98, 101, 192.

Yilma Déréssa, Seyoum focuses especially on the position of my study subject on the establishment of the Ethiopian Grain Corporation.¹³⁵

Taffara Deguefé (2006) in his reminiscence also records some important events and situations in relation to my study subject. Among such historical anecdotes, for instance, Taffara has recalled that Yilma Déréssa used to express his regret about the might-have-been, while musing about the fate of those unimplemented constitutional reforms drafted after the tragic *coup d'état* of 1960. He also mentions Yilma, of course together with other officials, in connection with the subsequent Five Years Plans.¹³⁶

In terms of tribute to Yilma Déréssa, no autobiographical literature is as generous as Bulcha Demeksa's *My Life, My Vision for the Oromo and Other Peoples of Ethiopia*. Bulcha dedicated a full chapter in his memoirs to the personality and professional achievements of Yilma Déréssa exclusively.¹³⁷ Moreover, in this reminiscence, he emphatically discusses the place of the Oromo in a history book which Yilma has published in 1966.¹³⁸ As a close colleague of my study subject, Bulcha also gives relatively detailed facts about the public life of Yilma Déréssa as well as the historical context in which the Ministry of Finance used to function. What is interesting in Bulcha's book is his personal conclusion about "the ouster of Yilma Deressa from center stage" at the end of 1968.¹³⁹

Though the references are anecdotal, the dual reminiscences of Richard and Rita Pankhurst in a single book also refer to Yilma and his wife Elisabét Wärqinäh. The remarks are very brief and

¹³⁵ Seyoum, 10, 21, 22, 32, 68, 237, 238, 239, 279, 230,

¹³⁶ Taffara, 187, 233

¹³⁷ The reminiscence of Bulcha consists of twenty chapters with a total of 281 pages. Chapter Seven with a title of "My Association with Yilma Deressa" discusses issues directly related to my study subject within twenty pages. Bulcha Demeksa (2013).

¹³⁸ Yilma Déréssa, *Yä Itiopia tarik....*

¹³⁹ Bulcha, *My Life My...*, 81.

mention intermittent occasions.¹⁴⁰ Likewise, Märsi'e Hazen's memoir, in passing reference, makes note of Yilma Déréssa's attendance, in a few words, at Mīnilik II School in early twentieth century.¹⁴¹ In his recently published memoir, Täklä Şadiq Mäkuria dedicates some eight pages to an account of assignments that he took on with Yilma Déréssa in 1945-46 at the Ministry of Fine Arts and Education. It is important to remark here that Täklä Şadiq's account in these pages fully agrees with documents at the Ministry of Finance.¹⁴² Interestingly, Täklä Şadiq's admiration for Yilma's accomplishments in the Ministry didn't affect his critical remarks about him in other circumstance.¹⁴³

As indispensable these works seem to be in the reconstruction of the life and works of Yilma Déréssa, being the fruits of extremely personal predilection; selection, omission and the fallibility of human memory are their major shortcomings. The above-mentioned works, incidentally, are not exceptions. But, "they illuminate the frame of mind in which not only the book[s] was written but the lives themselves were led."¹⁴⁴

This being the case in the written sources; let me now turn my consideration in a few words to the oral tradition. It is understandable that any oral "message containing historical information tells us about events or sequences of events, describes a situation of the past, or reports a trend."¹⁴⁵ There is also a belief that "oral tradition is still a living force in those countries where literacy has not yet displaced a predominantly oral culture. Today they are increasingly regarded

¹⁴⁰ Richard and Rita Pankhurst, *Ethiopian Reminiscences Early Days* (Los Angeles: Tsehai Publishers, 2013), 148, 189.

¹⁴¹ Märsi'e Hazan Waldä-Qirqos, , *Tizitayé Silä Rasé*....145.

¹⁴² Folder No. A6042-6070, *Şola Mägazän*, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (Hereafter, ŞM, MOFED).

¹⁴³ For instance, while Yilma was announcing the arrival of the Emperor on an open automobile to the people of Addis Ababa on May 5, 1941, Täklä Şadiq criticized Yilma for not acknowledging the contributions of patriots to the liberation day. See Täklä Şadiq Mäkuria, *Yä'Hiywät*....88.

¹⁴⁴ Tosh, 94.

¹⁴⁵ Vansina, *Oral Tradition*.... 31.

as evidence of how non-élite communities construct and modify cultural meaning over time.”¹⁴⁶

It is needless to note here that Yīlma is popular, especially within the bureaucracy, as a result of folktales associated with him. Throughout my research project, I may emphasize, the majority of all my first conversations with informants or even other people began with political jokes, actual or fabricated ones, most of which are associated with Yīlma Déréssa.¹⁴⁷ Of course, a good number of the oral traditions about Yīlma Déréssa are humorous in their nature and most of them can be categorized as political humors. Like written texts, therefore, the folktales about Yīlma Déréssa shed light not only on the personality of my study subject, but also on how a social group in the imperial bureaucracy used political humor as a “means of criticism and social control based on projecting (mostly implicit) norms and values of specific community.”¹⁴⁸ What is interesting is that, with regard to Yīlma Déréssa, oral tradition and oral history converge and diverge in these folktales.¹⁴⁹

1.5. Statement of the Problem

It is unequivocal that Yīlma Déréssa was an important Ethiopian high level functionary authority, diplomat and politician during the reign of Emperor Hailä Sīllassé I. He was, therefore, one of the personalities behind changes and transformation that the country has experienced in the 20th century. In parallel with his official government responsibilities, he wrote books and

¹⁴⁶ Tosh, 295.

¹⁴⁷ Even potential informants who declined to give oral interview cannot help but tell one or two political jokes associated with Yīlma.

¹⁴⁸ Villy Tsakona and Diana Elena Popa, “Humour in politics and the politics of Humour: An introduction” in *Studies in Political Humour*, ed. Villy Tsakona and Diana Elena Popa (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2011), 4.

¹⁴⁹ A renowned scholar on oral tradition explained that “the sources of oral historians are reminiscences, hearsay, or eyewitness accounts about events and situations which are contemporary, that is, which occurred during the life time of the informants. This differs from oral traditions in that oral traditions are no longer contemporary. They have passed from mouth to mouth, for a period beyond the lifetime of the informants. The two situations typically are very different with regard to the collection of sources as well as with regard to their analysis.” Vansina, *Oral Tradition*..., 12-13.

newspaper articles in the earlier publications of *Addis Zämän*. Though sources from the period of the Imperial Government of Ethiopia assert that he was one of the most powerful persons in the country in the 1960s, no full-fledged work exists on his life. No research has been conducted on the decisive personal and public experiences of Yīlma Déréssa. The scanty information available in the literature and folktale does not explain the once considerable personal and public experiences of Yīlma Déréssa fully. It is, therefore, only through empirically well-informed and conceptually grounded research that we may have a complete life history of this distinguished personality.

1.6. Objective of the Study

This study is conducted aiming at the reconstruction of a historical biography of Yīlma Déréssa from his date of birth in 1907 to his death in 1979. This study, as a historical biography, sets the historical context of the times of Yīlma Déréssa at the outset. Indeed, the period in which Yīlma lived (1907-1979) and the activities in which he was engaged steadfastly occupy pivotal roles in the history of Ethiopia as the country has experienced enormous changes. However, as if these seven decades fail to satisfy our curiosity, it is foreseeable to push the time of our study few decades back to figure out Yīlma's family background and social milieu, not for the sake of chronological irredentism, but out of necessity, and enter into a much more crucial historical interlude that had immense impact on societies and individuals. It is not eccentric, in this regard, then that either the second half or the last quarter of the 19th century is the bench mark *per se* for

many works on Ethiopian history.¹⁵⁰ Consequently, this biographical study has attempted to describe the social and family background of Yīlma Déréssa together with his formative years.

Yīlma Déréssa was known for his profound services in two major activities of modern Ethiopian government especially after liberation until 1974: economy and foreign relations. Hence, this study narrates and attempts to analyses the role of my study subject in these significant public arenas in detail. In addition to my historical discussion on his technocratic achievements in various core government institutions, I have also examined both the literary works of Yīlma Déréssa and the very phenomena of the folk literature associated with my study subject. Furthermore, considering the supposition of ‘the personal is the political’ the study has given due emphasis to the private life of Yīlma until his last days.

1.7. Significance of the Study

That said, “though any country’s history, in large measure is shaped by impersonal factors, there can be no gainsaying the importance of the lives, aspirations and achievements of individuals. Biographical study is, therefore, recognized as a major field of historical investigation.”¹⁵¹ As a son of Çaltu Sonto and *Bilata* Déréssa Amänté who is believed to be the cousin of *Däğazmač* Kumsa Moräda, recording the life experiences of Yīlma Déréssa is also in fact a biographical approach to a history of the center-periphery relations after the incorporation of *Léqa* Näqämté into the Ethiopian state. In examining the immediate family background of Yīlma Déréssa too, one can also clearly see what individuals like his father achieved in the process of modernization at the political center of the Imperial Government with a different social background. Hence,

¹⁵⁰Remarkable works on the modern history and politics of Ethiopia such as Bahru, *A History of ...*; Rubenson, *Survival of...*; Harold Marcus, *The Life and...*; Teshale Tibebe, *The Making of Modern Ethiopia 1896-1974* (New Jersey: The Red Sea Press, 1995); Addis Hiwot, *Ethiopia from Autocracy to Revolution* (London: Merlin Press, 1975) and others give due emphasis to the importance developments in the 19th century.

¹⁵¹ Belainesh, Chojnacki and Pankhurst (1975).

while examining the social and family background of Yilma Déréssa by appreciating the personal experience of his father *Bilata Déréssa Amänté* as a reformist intellectual and regular contributor to *Birhanina Sälam* newspaper before the Italian invasion of 1935, one can address the question of historical agency in the momentous process of modernization, approaching it, of course, biographically.

Studying the eventful experiences of Yilma Déréssa as a member of the Black Lion Organization, as a planner to establish ‘The Western [Oromo] Confederation’, and deportee of by the Italian Fascist Government in Ponza during the Italian occupation, is in fact examining, by way of a biographical approach, how and why Ethiopians reacted to the invasion as well as what they encountered during the occupation. In the post-1941 period, Yilma Déréssa served the Ethiopian Government occupying different government offices till 1974. Accordingly, this research that covers the lively personal and public aspects of his life would definitely contribute a lot, with new insights and approaches, to the scholarly effort in historical knowledge production. As an approach to other historical studies in the period under discussion, a biography of Yilma Déréssa helps to illuminate some themes in Ethiopian history. In this respect, the dissertation refers to broader historical subject matters such as center-periphery, fiscal centralization, diplomacy and the issue of ethnic identity in Ethiopian politics. The study is believed to be of a considerable importance especially to historians, political scientists, economists, sociologists, literary scholars, and the general readers.

1.8. Research Methodology

Biographical study is an important genre of historical study.¹⁵² Among various genres of biography, especially critical biography (critical because of the rigorous research methodology it employs similar to other historical studies) is a result of carefully interrogated sources. Moreover, “no fictional devices or manipulations of materials are permitted, and the life is generally developed in straight chronological order.”¹⁵³ Therefore, this dissertation is essentially a result of qualitative research in general and a historical research method in particular. Though to limited extent, the study is also a sort of literary biography since my study subject produced two books, one in Amharic and the other in English. Yilma Déréssa seems to have also edited an anthology of poems to which he has written a foreword.¹⁵⁴ It is pertinent to note here that literary biography tells the life of writers. Its biographers, therefore, fundamentally “study the literary works themselves and the lives, the minds, and the times that produced them.”¹⁵⁵

Categorically, different types of sources are consulted: primary written, oral, pictorial, secondary, locally as well as foreign generated documents. However, written materials constitute the major data for this political biography. “Written sources are usually precise as regards time, place and authorship, and they reveal the thoughts and actions of individual men and women as no other source can do.”¹⁵⁶ Among these written materials, this research relied heavily on primary sources which consist of both public and private documents. The primary sources are mainly gathered from private collections, various record offices and archive departments of the

¹⁵² Lloyd E. Ambrosius, “Introduction”, in *Writing Biography: Historians and Their Craft*, ed. Lloyd E. Ambrosius (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2004):viii.

¹⁵³ Paul Murray Kendal, 188.

¹⁵⁴ Yilma Déréssa, ed., *Yadis Zāmān Māzmur, Silā Nāṣanāt Kībīr, Yā’itiopia wāṭat Šāhaṭiwoč Yādārūsut* (Addis Ababa: Mārha Ṭībāb Printing House, 1933. E.C.)

¹⁵⁵ Michael Benton, “Literary Biography: The Cinderella of Literary Studies” *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 39, No. 3 (Autumn 2005): 44 &45.

¹⁵⁶ Tosh. 56.

Ethiopian government institutions. I have also utilized the copies of periodicals such as *Birhanina Sälam*, *Negarit Gazeta* and *Addis Zämän* Amharic newspaper since their inception up until 1974. Though not crucial seen from the criteria of originality, the available secondary sources, published and unpublished, are also made use of appropriately. The other vital raw materials for this study, equally primary as written documents, of course, are oral sources in the form of oral history and oral tradition. The following paragraphs deal with the discussion on source materials of this biographical study.

To begin with, I have benefited from the personal collections of Yilma Déréssa's family, though the extent and condition of the documents were disappointing and below my expectation. Among scanty written sources in the possession of different family members, a letter of 33 pages which was said to be prepared by Hannah Yilma Déréssa and Dărăgä Déréssa Danké and sent as a family appeal to the Provisional Military Administrative Council while Yilma was in prison in January 1975 is a comparatively helpful material.¹⁵⁷ Produced under difficult condition in prison and now found in the possession of his grandson, a short personal testimony of Yilma Déréssa on his contributions to the country, is also another source material. The family is also in possession of short recollection, scanty and fragmented materials that require a cautious source evaluation. However, a careful examination of these all materials in comparison with original documents at the various record offices of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and different oral informants show that nearly all facts especially in the letter of family appeal to Provisional Military Administrative Council and Yilma's prison testimony and other scanty private documents are credible. Family members recall that due to the stiff

¹⁵⁷ Informants: Sofya Yilma and Bulča Dämäqsa

political tension during the Revolution period, many source materials are lost for fear of imminent repressions by political authorities.

The personal file of *Ato Yilma Déréssa* at the record office of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED) is by far the richest source as far as a political biography of my study subject is concerned. The file consists of nearly 600 personal and official letters as well as notices, the majority of them written in Amharic. They are either addressed to Yilma or penned by Yilma. The documents cover the period between the early 1940s to late 1960s. In this personal file, some documents deal with family affairs that transferred in the 1990s even after the death of Yilma in 1979.¹⁵⁸ I have also consulted personal files of *Ato Yilma Déréssa* at Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). In spite of the fact that documents from two personal files of the subject of my study at MOFA are not as abundant as sources from a file at MOFED; they are of similar nature in their variety. They provide a glimpse into the private and public lives of *Ato Yilma Déréssa*. Yet, if this biographical study must be reconstructed within the '*life-work-and-times*' tradition, undoubtedly, the personal files both at the MOFED and MOFA are insufficient. Therefore, I have examined related government documents especially from archives of *Täqalay Gimgä Bét* (trans. 'General Treasury', located in the compound of Central Statistics Agency) and *Šola Mägazän* (trns., *Šola Hall*), both record deposits which belong to MOFED, in the hope of corroborating facts mentioned in the personal files. These source materials illustrate not only the routine and particular activities which my study subject used to deal with but also the ways of the period. Few but valuable documents from various individuals, including pictorial evidences, are duly consulted.

¹⁵⁸The letters dealing with the pension of Ato Yilma which was denied during the Military Regime, written by authorities at the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Trade during the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (1991-1995) are noteworthy. Regarding issues of inheritance, official documents are also produced even after his death and found in the personal file of Ato Yilma at the archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Hereafter MOFA).

I have also referred to text and microfilmed documents, mostly generated by the British authorities, from the manuscript section of the library of Institute of Ethiopian Studies(IES), Addis Ababa University(AAU). They are of great value in reconstructing a political biography of Yīlma Déréssa especially in the early 1940s. In this regard, for instance, a file catalogued as IES, MS 3691 G-51 with a title “Ministry of Interior (Finance), Ethiopian Currency 1941-1943”, is remarkable.¹⁵⁹ I have also conducted an internet research and utilized the documents of the State Department of the United States of America. Besides, I benefited from the *Şāhafé Tī'zaz Wäldä Mäsqäl Tariku* Memorial Archive Center of the IES in reconstructing some aspects of Yīlma's biography. In this study, documents are also utilized from the National Archive and Library Agency (NALA) which possesses largely the records of the Imperial Ministry of Interior.

In addition to the manuscript section of the IES library, I also benefited a lot from its periodical collections. For this biographical study, especially, the value of *Negarit Gazeta* as well as *Addis Zāmān* newspaper is immense. *Negarit Gazeta* announces almost all legal matters of the Imperial Government, including numerous royal appointments, in the form of proclamations and legal notices. Needless to say, hence, it publicized the duties and responsibilities of the branches of government as well as their higher officials. As a prominent authority figure in various ministries, undoubtedly, the official tasks listed down in the *Negarit Gazeta* determined Yīlma's public life considerably.¹⁶⁰ Interestingly, some sources elucidate how Yīlma himself, on his part, played an important role in framing the regulations and practices of institutions as a builder of modern institutions in Ethiopia. If *Negarit Gazetaa* delineates the contour of official duties and responsibilities which helps to map out some actions of Yīlma Déréssa, *Addis Zāmān*, by

¹⁵⁹ Most probably, together with other documents, this file is a personal donation of the late historian Sven Rubenson.

¹⁶⁰ See *Negarit Gazeta*, Order Number 1 of 1943 , An Order to Define the Powers and Duties of Our Ministers, 29 January, 1943.

chronicling what Yīlma Déréssa did for decades, records some of the activities he was engaged in.

No matter how valuable *Nāgarit Gazéta* and *Addis Zāmān* are, however, these government publications, even more than official records at MOFED, MOFA, IES and NALA, can be criticized for their statist perspective and formal nature. Biography, as Leon Edel stresses, “attempts to preserve, what it can, of human greatness or humbleness; to describe a pilgrimage from childhood to maturity and finally to the grave, and in this process the labors, errors, passions and actions that lead to accomplishment.”¹⁶¹ It is also emphasized that “biography [is] a record of the individual human mind as much as of the exploits of a person.”¹⁶² It is here, thus, where the very employment of oral history and oral tradition matter. Family members, close friends, colleagues of Yīlma Déréssa and others, at Gimbi, Nāqāmté and Addis Ababa, tell what they observed and remember about his personality. Above all, key informants narrate some aspects of the life of my subject of study that government documents and periodicals fail to capture.¹⁶³ Moreover, as I realized eventually in the course of repeated oral interviews of key informants,¹⁶⁴ oral sources usually only further underline a need for elaboration and better options to verify interpretations.¹⁶⁵ Yet, oral information is also one major limitation in this

¹⁶¹ Edel, 4.

¹⁶² Hamilton, 57.

¹⁶³ The “*Mazāža* system” in budget process is a case in point. As it is discussed in the following chapters *Mazāža* can be defined as a financial order by the Emperor through the Minister of the Pen payable to whomever got the favor of the sovereign either from legally approved account in the budget or from any extraordinary financial source.

¹⁶⁴ Informants: Bulča Dāmāqsa, Sofīa Yīlma, Asfaw Damte, Bīrhanā Déréssa, Tāšomā Gābrā Mariam, Māngāša Siyum and Ašānafī Šīfāraw.

¹⁶⁵ A pioneer scholar on oral tradition argues that “when historians study written documents the voice of their authors is heard once and for all, i.e., the subjective interpretation they bring to the writing of a document is given once and for all. It can only be partially circumvented by comparing documents. But that does not hold in the case of oral information. Because one deals with living people, it is possible to find a larger number of points of view to compare and to acquire a better sense of what exactly informs the subjectivity of different sources. It follows that there is less room for the historical imagination of the historian than in the case of written sources that cannot

study. No informant, including colleagues and family members, dared to talk critically about the weaknesses, flaws, negative aspects of *Ato Yilma Déréssa* and his personal life. As a result, I feel that this study does not provide a complete picture of Yilma Déréssa.

Besides oral history, as I mentioned earlier, oral tradition is also another source material consulted in this study. Informants recall that political jokes of all sorts which are attributed to Yilma Déréssa used to circulate by word of mouth especially among the civil servants. No doubt, among other social and political functions, jokes were instrumental in the portrayal of Yilma Déréssa's personality in the public arena. Here, these witty narratives, whether they are factual or fictitious, are utilized as historical evidences at the least for elucidating what was thought about issues that were the objects of the jokes. Any messages containing historical information, Jan Vansina argues, "tells us about events or sequences of events, describes a situation of the past, or reports a trend."¹⁶⁶ Therefore, oral narrative are important as they "testify then to opinions and values held, to mentalities, and that is their value, not as testimony of fact. It is therefore important to scrutinize traditions for signs that they are in fact expressions of generalizations or norms rather than statements of observations of events or situations."¹⁶⁷ All these primary sources are tested out against the existing secondary sources. These materials, on the one hand, comprise unpublished research outcomes such as senior essays, MA theses and PhD dissertations. On the other hand, they include published materials of various forms most importantly journal articles, book chapters and books.

From the above discussions on the concept of biography, the multilayered survey of biographical literature and the research methodology, the following concluding remarks can be made taking a

talk back." Jan Vansina, "Epilogue: Fieldwork in History" in *Pursuit of History: Fieldwork in Africa*, eds. Carolyn Keyes Adenaike and Jan Vansina (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1996), 138.

¹⁶⁶ Vansina, *Oral Tradition*..., 31.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 31-32.

biographical study of Yilma Déréssa as a reference point. To begin with, seen from methodological point of view, the political biography of Yilma Déréssa is more of a historical study than a literary research. The organization, evaluation, synthesis and analysis of written and oral sources gathered from government archives, private document collections and knowledgeable informants indicates that such biographical studies is a scientific endeavor. Indeed, the story line (birth-growth-adulthood-old-age-death) resembles one of the major fictional elements in creative writing with its focus on the life experience of single protagonist. Despite criticisms against the adequacy of a biographical study in providing explanations for broader historical processes, it attempts to reflect on the role of individuals in history. Biography as an approach to broader historical themes, illustrates other historical processes. The biographical study of Yilma Déréssa, of course, primarily will investigate a life account of Yilma Déréssa as a *dramateia persona*. However, to capture the full picture of the private and public life of Yilma, due examination of dynamic historical processes in which his personal life and political career played out will be in order and this makes the study worthy.

The birth and growth of critical biographical study coincided with the emergence of individualism in the western world that saw historical change and transformation. In this respect, the focus of biographers in their choice of study subject mainly revolved around personalities who were the agents and the products of change both in the global, the continental and the national context. The discussion on historical context in which Yilma Déréssa lived will also signify comparable, if not similar, changes that Ethiopia experienced. In this regard, almost all biographical works in Ethiopian history surveyed briefly in this study also concentrated on the life, times and works of individuals who lived in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which were the times of momentous change. Dealing with Yilma's life account in the same historical

setting, therefore, this study complements the existing body of knowledge in biographical study. Related to the biographical literature surveyed in this study, an emerging autobiographical literature has recently supplemented the knowledge production of biography which deals essentially with the life of individuals who were born and lived in this period of change and transformation. Produced by the protagonists themselves, these works imply that the narrators have felt a sense of individuality.

Chapter Two:

Historical Context

Yilma Déréssa was born in 1907 in the same year of the first Council of Ministers establishment and a year after Emperor Mīnilik II had suffered the first stroke. Having attended his elementary and secondary schools at Mīnilik II School and the Victoria College in Alexandria respectively, he joined London School of Economics in 1929. Receiving his first degree in Economics, he returned home and began his government service at the Ministry of Foreign affairs (1933-1935).¹⁶⁸ After his double involvements in the short-lived Black Lion Movement and the “Western [Oromo] Confederation” in western and south-western Ethiopia, Italian officers exiled him to Italy to join the war prisoner *Ras* Īmīru Hailā-Sīllassé at Ponza just to be released years later and serve the Italians in Addis Ababa in *Ufficio Politico*.¹⁶⁹ Yilma then resumed his state service after liberation as a Director General, then Vice-Minister of Finance (1942-49), Minister of Commerce and Industry (1949-53), Ethiopian Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in the United States of America(USA) and the United Nations(1953-58), Minister of Foreign Affairs (1958-60), Minister of Finance (1960-1969) and Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (1969-71). Furthermore, he was the president of the Board of Governors of Hailā Sīllassé I University and a member of the Crown Council (1971-74).¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Informants: Sofya Yilma, Bīrhanā Déréssa and Habtā-Sīllassie Tafässā; Farago, 38.

¹⁶⁹ Hadis, 200-228.

¹⁷⁰ Sālāmon Gäbrā-Mariam to Yilma Déréssa, Hamlé 6, 1962 E.C. Private Collection of Yāmanā Ījīgu, New York, USA. A copy of this document is also found in the personal file of Yilma Déréssa in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Anonymous person also witnessed that a copy of the document is found in the archive of the Ministry of Pen. The document indicates that it was written to Yilma in response to the latter's request to have the copies of letters of appointment from the Ministry of Pen. As the Council of Ministers was re-established in 1966, the Amharic daily newspaper has published the personal accounts of members of the Council of Ministers. See *Addis Zāman*:Miazia 5, 1958 E.C.

Having lived in Ethiopia, Egypt, England, Italy and the USA for more than seven decades in the very dramatic 20th century, finally, after four and half years of detention at the grand palace since June 1974 by the Provisional Military Administrative Council alias *Därg*, Yılma Déréssa died at the age of 72 in 1979. Next to his deathbed in a room at the hospital of Imperial Body Guard, out of sheer suspicion the *Därg* assigned a well armed soldier to keep an eye on an ailing Yılma. He was a father of two sons and four daughters by two women, W/ro Qīdīst Tāsāma and W/ro Elisabet Wārqīnäh.¹⁷¹

The above narrative, admittedly, is an extremely condensed, simplistic, and linear account that deals only with the beginning, middle and the end of the life and work of my study subject. To capture the better picture of the life and works of Yılma Déréssa, it is essential to set a historical context even for a one-dimensional biographical narrative with its renowned motif of ‘beginning, middle and end’. As a son of *Bīlata* Déréssa Amānté and Çaltu Sonto, a family which belongs partly to the Wälläga aristocracy and as an author of two history books as well, it is no wonder that the historical context for a political biography of Yılma Déréssa would be quite wide-ranging. However, I have tried to be cautious in setting the context suitable for the life and works of the subject.

In this regard, needless to say, “history is the discipline of context; each fact can be given meaning only within an ensemble of other meanings.”¹⁷² The very approach of my biographical study, therefore, is mainly based on the view that “the men whose actions the historian studies were not isolated individuals acting in a vacuum: they acted in a context, and under the impulse

¹⁷¹ Informant: Sofia Yılma

¹⁷² E.P. Thompson, “Anthropology and the Discipline of Historical Context,” *Midland History*, I, No. 3 (Chichester, England: Phillimore, 1971):45.

of a past society.”¹⁷³ Due emphasis, accordingly, is given to the suggestion that “the underlying principle of all historical works is that the subject of our enquiry must not be wrenched from its setting.”¹⁷⁴ Not to consider the contextual perspective in biographical studies, so runs the argument, “prevents us from fully understanding the changes over time in our subject’s life some large, but most incremental and, above all, the importance of contingency in the course of a life span.”¹⁷⁵ Interestingly, in this context-in-development, Yilma Déréssa was both, to use the language of discourse, the object and the subject of the changes.¹⁷⁶ In this dissertation, therefore, by elucidating the life and works of Yilma Déréssa in a relevant historical context, I have attempted to indicate how Yilma was under the sway of the larger forces of change. Above all,

¹⁷³ Carr, 35.

¹⁷⁴ Tosh, 10-11.

¹⁷⁵ Schoppa, 49.

¹⁷⁶ Having consulted the available materials on the period under discussion (1900s -1970s), I have come to the conclusion that the historical context for a biography of Yilma Déréssa, compared to its state of permanence, was a context in change. This is mainly because Yilma was born, brought up, worked and died in the ‘age of modernization’ in Ethiopia. The debate how the changes (‘modernization’, ‘modernity’) were perceived by the historical actors themselves and scholars in later period seems to have been a topic of empirical and speculative debates. Interestingly, in this context-in-development, Yilma Déréssa was both, to use the language of discourse, the object and the subject of the changes. See Messay Kebede, *Survival and Modernization Ethiopia’s Enigmatic Present: A Philosophical Discourse* (Lawrenceville: The Red Sea Press, 1999); Messay Kebede, “Gebrehiwot Baykedagn, Eurocentrism, and the Decentering of Ethiopia,” *Journal of Black Studies*, 36, No. 6 (July 2006): 815-832; Bahru, *Pioneers of ...*; Elizabeth Wolde Giorgis, “Charting Out Ethiopian Modernity and Modernism,” *Callaloo*, 33, No. 1, (Winter 2010): 82-99. Though there are some variations between these writings, both works go with thematically, that is to say, the authors argued that “the conception about Ethiopia’s backwardness has roots in the Eurocentric world-view.” For instance, Elisabeth argued that “Baykedagn’s reading of cultural and historical phenomena in terms of “Otherness,” although not explicitly articulated, reconstituted the identity of the Ethiopian “Other.” While this “Other” functioned within the means of production of the dominant European culture, it also ultimately became a Western import or a hybrid form, uniting local conceptions with Western conceptions.” See, Elisabeth, 96. Messay Kebede, similarly noted that “the Eurocentric conception of history prevented Baykedagn from developing any positive view about Ethiopian history and culture.” See “Gebrehiwot Baykedagn...,” 815. Despite their merit in problematizing cultural themes in the existing body of historical knowledge, the major shortcoming of these two works is that both failed to examine the objective, not the subjective, roots of the idea of modernity and modernization in Ethiopia. Though far from epistemological consent among social scientists, the conceptualizations of subject-object/agency-structure/historical actor/historical context especially in sociology and historical studies are essentially are workable tools of analysis. The theoretical debate on the connection or disconnection between agency and structure is still on-going among the leading scholars of the discipline. Francois D’epelteau pointed out that “Sociology has been strongly influenced, indeed on the question of agency-structure, by two modes of perception of the social universe over the last two or three decades: co-determinism and relationism. The most influential is co-determinism.” In contemporary sociology, this refers to the works of well-known social scientists such as M. Archer (1982, 1995, 2000a, 2000b, 2003), R. Bhaskar (1998), P. Berger and T. Luckmann (1967), P. Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 1990a, 1990b), A. Giddens (1979, 1984, 1986, 1990, 1993), C.W Mills [1959] 2000, and N. Mouzelis (1989, 1993, 1995, 2000). See D’epelteau, 51-73.

by illuminating his individuality both in his public and private lives based on the available sources, I have represented Yīlma as a historical actor.¹⁷⁷

Categorically, the relevant historical setting for my subject of the study is the Ethiopian state. As high-ranking and an influential politician in the Imperial Government of Ethiopia, Yīlma's life and career is directly and closely linked with the Ethiopian state. An attempt to understand Yīlma Déréssa without a pertinent discussion of the defining nature, institutions and practices of the Ethiopian state is to misunderstand him, to say the least.¹⁷⁸ In this chapter, therefore, having given a summarized appraisal of the available literature on the nature of the Ethiopian state, I have attempted to reconstruct the broad historical backdrop against which I portray the biographical account of Yīlma Déréssa.

2.1. The Ethiopian State

It is concisely and precisely noted that “the twentieth century saw structural transformations in many aspects of state and society in Ethiopia.”¹⁷⁹ As the corpus of literature especially on the government of Ethiopia indicate, from 1900s to 1970s, not to play down some persistent political

¹⁷⁷ Because of the complex nature of Structure-Agency relation, in this study, no attempt is made to give a conclusion whether structure determine agency or vice-versa.

¹⁷⁸ This works somewhat even for a biography of an individual who is not a politician. The Ethiopian state, a decisive force behind many remarkable developments, eventually occupied an important position in the historical process in the period under discussion, consequently, any analysis of historical context revolves around, but by no means confined to, it. Needless to state that the emergence and strengthening of political and administrative centralization, of course, facilitated by the expansion of different sorts of infrastructure (telecommunication, railway and roads) as well as the advent of imperial bureaucracy have steadily enhanced the domineering position of the imperial state in the country even in provinces and regions hitherto unaffected by it. This impact includes important local trade centers and activities, too. See Marcus, *The Life and...; Perham, The Government of...; Clapham (1969); Markakis (1974) and Richard Pankhurst. Economic History of Ethiopia 1800-1935* (Addis Ababa: Haile Selassie University Press, 1968), 446-451.

¹⁷⁹ Shiferaw Bekele, “The Evolution of Land Tenure in the Imperial Era,” In *An Economic History of Ethiopia. Vol. 1: The Imperial Era 1941-74*, ed. Shiferaw Bekele (Dakar: Codesria, 1995), 100.

values, practices and institutions, politics in Ethiopia did undergo noticeable change.¹⁸⁰ Nearly all developments at most had begun or at least had taken their course at the close of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century which “marked a great turning point in the history of Ethiopia.”¹⁸¹ In fact, historical processes that had taken place then did influence greatly later developments.¹⁸²

One possible explanation for the dynamic aspect of this historical context in the twentieth century (1900s-1970s), not to forget the significance of remarkable domestic historical developments, is the very consequence of the interaction which Ethiopia had had with the neighboring and far away states and international powers throughout the 19th century.¹⁸³ A clear outcome of the interaction and relation with European powers, among many others, was the introduction and adoption of new economic and political institutions and practices. Obviously,

¹⁸⁰ Among these works, Perham, *The Government of....*; Clapham(1969); Peter Schwab, “An Analysis of Decision-Making in the Political System of Ethiopia” (PhD Dissertation in Political Science, New School for Social Research, New York: 1970); Markakis(1974), can be taken as standard ones.

¹⁸¹ Tesema Ta'a, *The Political Economy of an African Society in Transformation: The Case of Macca Oromo(Ethiopia)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), 89

¹⁸² “It is no wonder that [Emperor Haile Sellassie] operates within the achievements and even the value system of Menelik II”, see Harold Marcus, *The Life and ...*, 6. This watershed, in turn, has its own genesis that originates essentially at the dawn of the nineteenth century. See, Sven Rubenson, (1976).

¹⁸³ Sven Rubenson explained the very formative years of this interaction of Ethiopia with outside powers as ‘The coming of a New Era’, Bahru describes the later stage which was leading towards its climax as ‘The External Challenge’. Sven Rubenson, *Survival of Ethiopian Independence*, Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 1976.p. 29. Bahru, *A History of....*, 24-80. Until the middle of the 19th century, probably because internal conflicts dominated the political scene, contacts were entirely a European initiative. Therefore, it was the Europeans who needed or wanted something from Ethiopia, as from the rest of the world: spheres of influence, strategic bases for their own conflicts, markets for surplus goods, sources of raw materials, mission fields, and new homes. Tewodros began to take the initiative in the true sense of the word especially in the second half of the nineteenth century; ironically, the whole scheme ended in fiasco. For Tewodros relation with European powers was a question of initiative, of active national goals: the educational and technological advancement of Ethiopia and the containment and reversal of Egyptian expansion. All in all, in the context of Ethiopia’s nineteenth-century survival as an independent state, the reign of Tewodros was crucial in many respects. First, Tewodros perceived, as did none of his predecessors among the *mesafint* that the political anarchy, moral laxity, and technological backwardness of his people threatened national survival. In fact, the revival of European interest in the Ethiopian region was not a unique phenomenon. It was part of the general European penetration of Africa in the nineteenth century. Expansion of a more vigorous kind came from nearer home. It was Egypt that presented a challenge. In the final analysis, threatened nobilities both within and without badly needed the assistances from and friendship with European powers since the reign of Emperor Tewodros. Internal contention at most for imperial power or at least for regional autonomy was also another deriving force to seek alliance with European powers. Sven Rubenson, 51, 69, 89, 90, 174 & 269; Bahru, *A History of....* 24-26; Charles Schaefer, “Enclavistic capitalism in Ethiopia, 1906-1936: A study of currency, banking, and informal credit Networks” (PhD Dissertation in History, The University of Chicago, 1990), 23,33-44.

these economic political experiences, as an intricate process, did not take place at a moment and smoothly.¹⁸⁴ It is partly due to this phenomenon that scholars have utilized different concepts in their attempt to define what exactly the pre-Revolution Ethiopian state was.

For instance, the political system of the pre-1974 Ethiopia has been variously described as “traditional or feudal autocracy, absolute monarchy, constitutionalized absolutism, or feudo-bourgeois monarchy.”¹⁸⁵ The frequently utilized depictions of the Ethiopian state such as the ‘centralized government’ ‘the modern state’ and ‘Abyssinian Fuedalism’ are also examined in a scholarly manner to reconsider the common terminologies and explanations in the literature.¹⁸⁶ All in all, one can classify the existing literature on the Ethiopian state roughly into three categories based on their tacit views and straightforward characterizations. These are the ‘modernizing state’,¹⁸⁷ the ‘absolutist state’¹⁸⁸ and the ‘dependent colonial state’.¹⁸⁹ There is, however, one caution. The groupings are by no means mutually exclusive.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁴ A commendable material to study this development is Täklä-Hawaryat Täklä-Maryam’s personal account. See, *Yähéywäte tarik*, (Otobayografi) (Addis Abäba; Addis Ababa Universty Press, 1998 E.C.); Schaefer, 23,33-44.

¹⁸⁵ Desalegn Rahmato, “Political Power and Social Formation in Ethiopia Under the Old Regime: Notes on Marxist Theory,” in the *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. I, (Addis Ababa: Ababa University Press, 1988): p. 466. Desalegn also listed some of the standard works on the topic: Addis Hiwet(1975); Clapham (1969); P. Gilkes, *The Dying Lion, Feudalism and Modernization in Ethiopia* (London, Julian Friedmann, 1975); Greenfield, (1965); R. Hess, *Ethiopia, the Modernization of Autocracy* (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell Univ. Pr., 1970); John Markakis(1974); L. Mosley(1965); Perham, *The Government of....*; and Schwab(1970).

¹⁸⁶ Bahru Zewde, “Economic Origins of the Absolutist State in Ethiopia (1916-1935),” reprinted in *Society, State and History: Selected Essays* Bahru Zewde (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, 1984 and 2009): 96-119.

¹⁸⁷ Though not complete, Bahru has given proper appraisal on this topic. However, at least two works need due assessment: Teshale, *The Making of....*, and Zewde, *Yä qädamawi Hailä-Silassé Mängist, 2002 E.C.*, as it deals with government issues and developments *per se*, is probably the only comprehensive book written in Amharic of its kind. The book, as it is made clear in the title, covers the period between 1930 and 1955.

¹⁸⁸ Bahru, “Economic Origins...”; Bahru, *A History of* 201-209; Desalegn Rahmato, (1988) ; Tsegaye Tegenu, *The Ethiopian State The Evolution of Ethiopian Absolutism: The Genesis and the Making of the Fiscal Military State, 1696-1913*, (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1996).

¹⁸⁹ Bonnie K. Holcomb and Sisay Ibsa argue that “the Ethiopian state is a dependent colonial state.” The country, according to them, “has been from its formation an artificial unit, not a naturally-occurring one as so many believe and it should be recognized as such. Its creation was the result of an alliance struck between imperial powers of Europe who were seeking to manage their own conflicts in those days and Abyssinia that was attempting to resolve its internal crisis. This alliance gave rise to the set of state institutions that constitute Ethiopia today. These

In this chapter, my major task are to deal with the Ethiopian absolutist state with its historical particularities, to examine the relevant historical developments, institutions and practices of the state. The physical environment is also briefly discussed to situate Yīlma Déréssa in a pertinent historical setting. In this respect, it is well argued that “the framework of institutions which governs a society can, in the last resort, be understood only through knowledge of the whole human environment.”¹⁹¹

In this study, the Ethiopian absolutist state, in short, refers to the Ethiopian political formation which evolved in the course of responding especially to the external challenge in the age of colonialism and imperialism without changing or no need of changing its fundamental political and economic bases.¹⁹² Instrumental to this response was ‘modernity’.¹⁹³ In the course of its

institutions were the product of a European ruling class that had to send representatives to northeast Africa to serve as advisers to members of a local nationality willing to colonize the region with them.” See *The Invention of Ethiopia*, Trenton: The Red Sea Press, 1990. pp.xv-xvi. However, considering the services and livelihood of expatriates in Ethiopia since the early decades of the twentieth century as well as the diplomatic experiences of the country as a proof of the status of Ethiopia as a European invented dependent colonial state is not a sound argument. The absolutist state in Ethiopia did not have confusion on the instrumentality of foreigners and external practices in protecting itself from external threat. Gebrehiwet Baykedagn, lucky to be exposed to the outside world since his childhood, captured the turn of events. To give comparative evidence further, living under the immanent pressure from Europe proper, Russia during the emergence of its absolutism benefited a lot from foreigners. Harris noted that “as early as 1547 the Tsar of Russia sent an invitation to western specialists to enter his service, and some doctors, craftsmen and technicians did. By 1630 for the first time the Russian army was being trained by westerners. Subsequently, foreigners were brought into mining and smelting metals and to build factories. Ivan the terrible had welcomed foreigners, and so-called German Quarter sprang up in Moscow (all westerners being known as Germans, being the *färäng* of Ethiopia), which by the middle of the seventeenth century numbered *several thousands*, and included four Lutheran and Reformed churches and a German school(emphasis added). They brought in western skills and techniques, western clothes, customs and habits of thought.” This is an aspect of an absolutist state challenged from without, therefore, it did not result in the invention of Russia as a thesis of dependent colonial state assumes. See R.W. Harris, *Absolutism and Enlightenment* (London: Blandford Press, 1964), 130-135.

¹⁹⁰ For instance, many monographs on the pre-revolution Ethiopian state consider its gradual changing condition from one form to the other the direction being mostly from feudalism to three political systems: feudo-bourgeois, absolutism and modern. In this process, the monarchy or monarchism remained impassive and gave a common feature for all representations. The underlying assumption behind this view of change seems to be scholars’ considerations of measures taken by the state to reform the political system. This view is also reflected in almost all autobiographical accounts and reminiscences of imperial personnel as well as among my informants.

¹⁹¹ Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society* Vol. I. trans., L.A. Manyo (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. 2004), 59.

¹⁹² Here, the concept ‘absolutism’ seems to be a misnomer as it literally means that the Emperor exercised absolute power which was not historically true. Compared to the period when regional and provincial rulers used to enjoy excess power in their respective localities, absolutism began to reduce, if not to abolish immediately, the regional power and began to concentrate it at the central government in the process of diverse features.

evolution, however, the instrumentality of modernity is evidenced in the state's superficial acceptance and adoption of modern values, institutions and practices. Threatened more than ever by the European powers, therefore, the absolutist state attempted to take advantage of modernity in Ethiopia and became "a redeployed and recharged apparatus of feudal domination its arrival had been heralded and typified through centralized bureaucracy, national taxation, standing government army and diplomacy."¹⁹⁴

In the historiography of the Ethiopian state, at least five works are known for their employment of the concept of absolutism to define the pre-revolution political system of the country. We have also an attempt of deconstruction with a passing criticism particularly upon the Marxist conceptualization of absolutism.¹⁹⁵ Unlike the case in Ethiopian historiography, the literature on the Absolutist State in the western world is immense and would be extraneous as well as difficult to discuss it in a study of this sort.¹⁹⁶ Among the small number of works on the nature of the Ethiopian absolutist state, it was Bahru's article "Economic Origins of the Absolutist State in

¹⁹³ Charles Schaefer clearly remarked that "Menilek may not be Ethiopia's great modernizer, but certainly he was infatuated with the instruments of modernity." Schaefer, 182; Bahru, "Haile Sellassei...."; Bahru, *Pioneers of Change*..., 210. Dipesh Chakrabarty, 4. Perry Anderson named this phenomenon "surface modernity". See *Lineages of the Absolutist State*. London: Verso, 1974, 29.

¹⁹⁴ Anderson, 18, 31.

¹⁹⁵ Teshale Tibebu, "On the Question of Feudalism, Absolutism, and the Bourgeois Revolution," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, 13, No. 1 (Winter 1990): 49-152. He also attempted to revitalize his critique on the absolutist state in his later work *The Making of...*, 50, 156.

¹⁹⁶ In the Marxist historiography greatly and in non-Marxist tradition to some extent, the origin of the absolutist state in Europe is associated with one or other form of crisis in the antecedent system. The age of absolutism varies from country to country. However, it is safe to conclude that it emerged and ended in the period between 16th and 20th century. See Max Beloff, *The Age of Absolutism* (London: Hutchinson House, 1953); Harris (1964); Anderson (1974); John P. LeDonne, *Absolutism and Ruling Class, The Formation of the Russian Political Order 1700-1825* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Peter H. Wilson, *Absolutism in Central Europe* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000). Though not an up-to-date publication, C.D. Kerring's, ed., *Marxism, Communism, and Western Society, A Comparative Encyclopedia* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) gives a very good comparative assessment of Absolutism in both historiographical traditions. The Marxist view is well developed in the monumental work of Perry Anderson (1974). According to him "the long crisis of European economy and society during the 14th and 15th centuries marked the difficulties and limits of the feudal mode of production in the late mediaeval period. What was the final political outcome of the continental convulsions of this epoch? In the course of the 16th century, the Absolutist State emerged in the West. This State, unlike the understanding in the classical Marxist writings, is not a mediating force between the new and old classes but a redeployed and recharged apparatus of feudal domination." See Anderson, 18, 29.

Ethiopia (1916-1935)” that pioneered the characterization of the Ethiopian state as an absolutist one. Bahru aimed at “continuing the line of analysis of the Ethiopian state, save the appellation-absolutism, which has been conducted by two authors.”¹⁹⁷ In the “Economic Origins...” the term absolutism is used in the strictly defined form in which it is explained in Perry Anderson’s *Lineages of the Absolutist State*.¹⁹⁸

Admitting the difficulty in identifying an exact par for an Ethiopian Absolutism either in the Western or Eastern experience in Anderson’s analysis, Bahru pointed out the major attributes of Ethiopian absolutism which bear resemblances to absolutist states in both parts of Europe. The comparison begins with Eastern Absolutism. The Ethiopian absolutist state has shared basic characteristic feature with Absolutism in Eastern Europe “in its exogenous character, the superimposition of an advanced state apparatus on a backward socio-economic base.” The challenge without is also presented as another similarity. “The threat of Imperialism”, so runs the analysis, “was the overarching threat that Ethiopia would be carved up among the limitrophe colonial powers unless she adopted to ‘civilized’ standards by abolishing such heinous institutions as slavery and adopting Western forms of government and administration.” Seen from the perspective of class analysis in the Ethiopian state and society, Bahru also pointed out

¹⁹⁷In his conceptual review, Bahru recognized the contribution of Addis Hiwet and Joanna Mantel Niecko to the historiography of the emergence of the modern Ethiopian state. Bahru highlighted Addis Hiwet’s argument that “such developments as commutation of dues, modern education and military re-organization are explained as ‘the imperative infrastructure for the modern state, which is essentially bourgeois. In fact, the quote goes: the rise of the modern state belongs to a late stage of feudal development.” Commenting on the work of Mantel Niecko, too, Bahru pointed out that she “continued the line of structural analysis Addis Hiwet began. She discerns a line of continuity between Menilek and Haile-Sellassie in the changes contributing to a new economic base for political power. These changes aimed not so much at social transformation as a reinforcement of feudal domination-the constitution of a system of administration with the exclusive aim of improving the organizing efficiency of the mechanism of power and as a consequence leaving undisturbed the social structure which was based on the feudal type of dependence. This was inevitable as the agents of change were themselves products of the feudal order.” See Bahru, “Economic Origins of...”, 99-100.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 100.

that “absence of an urban bourgeoisie as well as the royal monopoly of trade and administrative grip over towns was additional similarities with the East.”¹⁹⁹

Bahru argues that as the Ethiopian absolutist state was working for the abolition of the *gäbbar* system, contrary to the development in Eastern Europe, it resembles more Western absolutism than Eastern one. The Ethiopian society in the early twentieth century, like its western European predecessor some three centuries back, was a transitional one, moving away from feudalism and towards capitalism. “Further affinities can also be listed such as the 1931 constitution that provided a juridical framework for the Absolutist state, the initiation of the ‘ministerial system’ in 1907 which marked a birth of civil bureaucracy, the gradual emergence of the a professional army.”²⁰⁰

Having dealt with the general conceptual issues along with a comparative assessment, Bahru attempted to illustrate how the absolutization of the state power in Ethiopia, on a more or less similar pattern in Western Europe, was paralleled by the absolutization of property in the 1920s and 1930s.²⁰¹ Fiscal reorganization through centralized customs administrations is also discussed.²⁰²

With regard to Bahru’s discussion on the Absolutist State, it is interesting to point out the complementary aspect of “Economic Origins...” and *A History of Modern Ethiopia*.²⁰³ Focusing on the post-occupation period, in his later work, Bahru elaborated how “the period after 1941 witnessed the apogee of absolutism in Ethiopia. This was clearly manifested in such spheres as

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 103

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 104

²⁰¹ Instrumental to the process of the consolidation of privatization are edicts issued in October 1928, September 1930, the 1931 constitution, edict in May, 1935. *Ibid.*, 105-109.

²⁰² It is a remarkable fact that the “final years of the regency and the five years of emperorship (1930-1935) saw a spate of laws and decrees, a number of them having to do with fiscal administration.” Bahru, “Economic Origins...,” 109-115.

²⁰³ Bahru Zewde, *A History of...* 201-209

provincial administration, military organization and fiscal control.”²⁰⁴ Here, in his discussion on the bureaucracy, of course, one of the institutional innovations which heralded and typified the arrival of absolutism together with national army, centralized taxation, trade and international relations,²⁰⁵ Yilma Déréssa was described as “a scion of a minority aristocracy, that of Wälläga”. Though not next to Makonnen Habta-Wald as Bahru inaccurately situated Yilma Déréssa in the period after 1941, he left the strongest mark on the Ministry of Finance since September 1941.²⁰⁶

Desalegn Rahmato (1988) defines the structure of “political power in pre 1974 Revolution “as ‘absolutist, but NOT in line with Anderson’s analysis (emphasis in the original).”²⁰⁷ In this regard, he posed a question on “the ‘paradoxical’ nature of the absolutism, that is to say, the absolutist state, which for the first time created a centralized political apparatus, the structure of the modern state was at the same time the servant of the traditional landed powers.”²⁰⁸ Desalegn then argued that the Ethiopian absolutist state asserted its supremacy over all classes. When Desalegn rejected both the classical and the contemporary Marxist views on Absolutism, he noted that “Absolutism in Ethiopia was by no means the arbiter between contending social forces, for no such forces did in fact exist, nor was it the instrument of a resurgent nobility, because it was effectively shorn of its power and reduced to a subordinate position.”²⁰⁹ In short, the author concluded that “viewed ‘structurally’, the content of absolutism has more in common

²⁰⁴ Bahru, *A History of*....137-148;201-209.

²⁰⁵ Anderson, 29

²⁰⁶ Bahru, *A History of*...., 206

²⁰⁷ Desalegn does not seem to have been convinced how the absolutist state in Eastern Europe consolidated serfdom (re-infeudation), 466.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ Within this context, Desalegn pointed out, the absolutist state did not regard all classes equally. Of the variety of interests considered by the state, those of the nobility were accorded a most-favored status. Ethiopian absolutism did not in particular encourage the further infeudation of the peasantry, nor did it attempt to do away with feudal property relations where these were in force. According to him the state itself was an economic power not just because it determined the process of accumulation, but also it was the biggest land lord, industrialist, financier and employer. Desalegn, 467.

with modern-day post colonial states than post-medieval monarchies of either western or eastern Europe.”²¹⁰

It is important to make a remark here on a trend un-apprehended well in issues analyzed, indeed from different perspectives, by the two scholars. In his comparison, Bahru noted that “the serfdom (*gäbbar* system), unlike in the case of eastern absolutism, was going more towards its dissolution than its consolidation in Ethiopia.”²¹¹ This is mainly, I argue, because of the very character of a challenge/threat to the precursor political formation which obliged the emergence of absolutism in Ethiopia, that is, an external challenge in the form of colonialism and imperialism. It is pretty clear that the gradual weakening and abolition of the *gäbbar* system in Ethiopia was to do with direct and indirect pressures of external forces.²¹² The point here is that the very character of the crisis/threat/challenge that the nobility faced did matter a lot in the course that the absolutist state would take afterward. I have only one comment to make on what Desalegn described as a ‘paradox’, that is, the absolutist state is characterized as “fusion of two opposed tendencies, namely, that which is new with that which is traditional.” This is confusing a means (modernity) with an end (political power). In other words, in the Absolutist political system, ‘modern’ practices were merely instrumental to state power, and whoever could hold the power. It seems why we find terms such as ‘enlightened despotism’, ‘enlightened

²¹⁰The state in developing societies is said to be characterized by what is called an “over-developed” political structure. It supports a massive bureaucracy, a large force of coercion-in that it is not congruent with nor necessary for the needs of the rather backward and simple social and economic structures typically found in such societies. *Ibid.*, 463 and 468.

²¹¹ Bahru, “Economic Origins...”, 104.

²¹² Before its abolition, the *gäbbar* system had become the target of the reforming intellectuals and some groups of the capitalist world. Given this circumstance, it is very unlikely to attribute the end of the *gäbbar* system only to internal development. Bahru, *A History of...*, 92-93; Bahru, *Pioneers of Change...*, 124.

prince/empress', 'enlightened absolutism' and similar others in the historiography of the absolutist state.²¹³

With the purpose of identifying and explaining the resource base of the Ethiopian state during its process of organizing into a centralized power in the period between 1696 and 1913, Tsegaye Tegenu attempted to examine especially the financial aspect of the Ethiopian absolutist state.²¹⁴ The author begins his analysis with a survey of the theories and perceptions of absolutism, preferring Perry Anderson's theory of the absolutist state for "his structural approach and his association of absolutism with the transition from feudal to capitalist mode of production."²¹⁵ Tsegaye traced the origin of the absolutist state to the eighteenth century and attempted to give an account of major changes in the nature of taxation since 1696. However, "the idea of pushing the organization of centralized power to the eighteenth century seems far-fetched, just as the importance attached to the year 1696 seems somewhat over-blown."²¹⁶ This appears to be the major shortcoming of the work. According to Perry Anderson the absolutist state was "the new political carapace of threatened nobility."²¹⁷ In the context of Ethiopian absolutism, the threat seems to have come from external forces in late nineteenth century and in the first half of twentieth century. Tsegaye(1996) also pointed out that "first Egypt became ambitious to control the source of the Nile and the coasts of the Red Sea. This was followed by Italian, British and French colonialism on the Horn of Africa. Probably for the first

²¹³ A good example for this is Tsegaye Tegenu's characterization of Ethiopian political system under the reign of Emperor Haile-Sellassie as the 'enlightened absolutist state' (1916-1974). Though discussed with a different perspective, the subject is also dealt with in Bahru, "Hayla-Sellase: From...", 30-44.

²¹⁴ Tsegaye Tegenu(1996).

²¹⁵ Bahru Zewde, review of *The Evolution of Ethiopian Absolutism: The Genesis and the Making of the Fiscal Military State, 1696-1913*, by Tsegaye Tegenu, *The Journal of African History*, 40, No. 2, 1999, 304.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ Anderson, 18.

time, kings and princes were afraid of losing territory to outside powers.”²¹⁸ It is important to not that Ethiopian rulers attempted to introduce reforms both at the institutional and structural levels at the turn of the twentieth century mainly in response to the external threat.²¹⁹ Hence, the absolutist state evolved and was consolidated more in a later period than the 18th and the 19th centuries.

Another scholar that employed the concept of the absolutist state for its historical study is Gebru Tareke(1995) and argued that the absolutist state in Ethiopia was “the product of three major crises” namely: “the interclass conflict among the powerful rulers of the country between the years 1913 and 1928, the dissolution of the emerging monarchical government as a result of the Italian invasion” and finally “the restoration and the revival of the government despite it faced internal opposition and british influence.”²²⁰

As Anderson’s *Lineages of the Absolutist State* has come to influence studies about the Old Regime for some decades,²²¹ there is also a clear rejection and, at times, harsh denigration of the analysis in one work.²²² For Teshale Tibebu, the term ‘feudal’ especially within the context of the absolutist state is erroneous.²²³ He argued that “the label ‘feudal’ attached to the social system of [pre] 1974 is a misnomer. The monarchist ruling class had committed class suicide and

²¹⁸ Tsegaye, 102

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ Gebru Tareke, *Power and Protest in Ethiopia: Peasant Rebellion in Twentieth Century*(Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 44.

²²¹ Desalegn, 466.

²²² For example he used an expression to describe Anderson comparing him with the forerunners of Marxist view of history as “more catholic than the pope”. Teshale, “On the Question of...”, 61.

²²³ This rejection of the term ‘feudal’ to the Ethiopian political system is linked to his ‘merciless criticism’ against the analysis of the absolutist state especially in its Marxist perspective. Teshale even accused Perry Anderson of being euro-centric. When Teshale has attempted to refute the conceptual ground of Absolutism developed in his exemplary work with a Marxist perspective, he has described it as *Orientalism painted red*. According to Teshale [*Lineages*] becomes the *continuation of Orientalism by other means*. The other means is provided by theoretical Marxism (emphasis original). Establishing ones argument on the major premise that an author is European and considering anything that an author takes Europe as a study subject Orientalism is not convincing. *Ibid.*, 84-85.

become born-again bourgeois to the extent of 'advanced' and 'mechanized'.²²⁴ And how, Teshale remarked, "absolutism with its standing army, uniform taxation, the 'rediscovery' of Roman law, the beginning of Weber's rational bureaucracy, the formation of a 'national market', etc. can go *pari passu* with extra-economic coercion is a mystery."²²⁵ The fact that Teshale revitalized his view from the previous work, the "Ethiopian noble bourgeoisie did not duplicate the accomplishment of their Western or a Japanese counterpart is not to be explained by their feudal nature but rather by Ethiopia's position in the capitalist world economy."²²⁶

In a nutshell, the author attempted to disapprove a characterization of the pre-revolution Ethiopian state as feudal or absolutist and he proposed his own concept-a '*geber system*' as if this new term itself doesn't deal with feudalism.²²⁷ However, to characterize the ruling class in imperial Ethiopia as a bourgeoisie and not feudal while it was enjoying the privilege the political system offered and, on top of that, defended stubbornly, for instance in opposing land tenure and agricultural tax reforms, is far-fetched representation.²²⁸

That being a modest overview of the historiography on the Ethiopian absolutist state, among the attributes of the absolutist state relevant to a political biography of Yilma Déréssa is a discussion on public finance in Ethiopia. Generally, the introduction of centralized taxation in Ethiopia since 1941 is not a historical aberration.²²⁹ At the turn of the 20th century, for instance, "Emperor

²²⁴ Teshale, *The Making of...*, 156.

²²⁵ It is interesting to observe that Teshale's argument that Absolutism is a much advanced political system and it cannot be congruent with the backward feudal system makes his view similar to Desalegn's. Teshale, "On the Question of...", 69

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 156

²²⁷ Teshale, *The Making of...*, 3

²²⁸ Schwab, 11; Markakis, 287.

²²⁹ From 1855 onwards, Tsegaye Tegenu stated, "successive kings had undertaken administrative and different tax-technical measures to increase government revenue and the logistic capacity of the state. The major source of government revenue was from agriculture and a share was contributed by ordinary and extraordinary land tax. With the coming of colonialism on the Horn of Africa there came a process of state integration with the capitalist world economy. An increase in international trade, especially during the reign of Menilek II." Tsegaye

Menilek II dispatched officials throughout the country to staff the imperial treasury (*gimṣa bet*), overseeing the collection of taxes and their transfer to Addis Abāba.”²³⁰ In this regard, Emperor Mīnilik II took important initiatives to control the country’s economy in a centralized way. One of the measures of the emperor that “aided in laying the foundations for enclavistic capitalism was his administrative reforms over the economy and the redefinition of the role of *nāgadras* (‘head of the merchants’).”²³¹ By organizing the *negadras* under his authorities “more revenue found its way to the imperial treasury, as opposed to going into the pockets of provincial rulers.”²³²

Government control over the economy was not limited to revenue collection. There had been initiatives to expend from imperial treasury too. For instance, “in the provinces, government officials and soldiers were paid out of *gimṣa bet* stores, though the details of actual practice likely varied in time and place.”²³³ In the period between the establishment of the Ministry of Finance and the Italian invasion, “the finance minister was then, theoretically at least, responsible for tallying the registers of all the *gimṣa bet* in the provinces and had the authority to

emphasized, “with Europe led to qualitative development of internal reforms by way of introducing new transaction currency, banking and transportation facilities, and privileged monopolies.” See Tsegaye, 239-240. In response partly to these economic developments, among the ministerial offices that Emperor Menilek II had established in October 1907, the Ministry of Finance was best known in its traditional name *yāguada minister* (lit. ‘Ministry of the Stockroom’) and it served as a royal treasury. However, more than the Ministry of Finance, it was through the Ministry of Commerce and Revenue that the successive rulers of the country secured their control over revenue and finance. See Mahteme Sellasse, 372-413. . Likewise, Bahru complemented Tsegaye’s argument and added that “the final years of the Regency and the five years of emperorship before the war saw a spate of laws and decrees, a number of them having to do with fiscal administration.” Bahru, “Economic Origins...,” 113. It is important to underscore here that “throughout history the submission to a conqueror was expressed by the payment of tributes in kind which, besides its symbolical meaning, could also have considerable material value. Earliest records of such provincial tributes to the rulers can be found in royal chronicles which list the tributary provinces and in some cases the typical goods they were obliged to send to the ruler.” Richard Pankhurst, “Tributes and traditional taxation,” in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 4 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 984b.

²³⁰ Tim Carmichael, “*Gimṣa bet*,” in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 2 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 741b.

²³¹ Scafer, 59.

²³² *Ibid.*, 61.

²³³ Carmichael, “*Gimṣa bet*,” 741b.

inspect their stores and registers at any time. This system ensured a degree of central government control over the country's finances, but granted local administrations some fiscal freedom."²³⁴

No matter how imperial *gīmḡa bét* (treasury houses) were opened in the provinces and the *nāgadrases* attempted to centralized tax collection in provinces, "Menelik built up his huge politico-military and administrative structure [fundamentally] on the bases of the *Sirit* of the land of the newly incorporated provinces."²³⁵ Hence, there hadn't been standardized national taxation in the country. As Shiferaw Bekele clearly explains, one of the major ambitions of Hailä-Silassé and the Westernizers around him was to change precisely the *Sirit* foundation of the system into money in order to create a modern army and bureaucracy."²³⁶ Due to crucial socio-political circumstances, "in the years between 1916 and 1935, they were not able to do much. With the introduction of money, a civilian bureaucracy, and a professional salaried army, *Sirit* outlived its *raison d'être*."²³⁷

Historically, centralized taxation was put into practice most often through the introduction of money. Therefore, it was difficult to implement it as "Ethiopia did not have a national legal tender currency until the end Second World War. The currency that came close to assuming this

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ *Sirit*, Shiferaw Bekele explains, indicated four interconnected meanings in the land tenure system before the standardization of taxation in post liberation period. It indicated "an obligation to land and this referred to the kind of services that the owner was expected to give to the state." The second meaning denotes ownership. Shiferaw explained that "a particular piece of land with the obligations could be given out in perpetuity (*rīst*) or temporarily (*madāriya*)." The third meaning of *Sirit* is tribute imposition. In this fundamental meaning of land tenure system "a lord or king would impose on a district, or even a province tribute to be paid in honey, or clothes or horses." The fourth meaning of *Sirit* is billeting. In this arrangement, "soldiers and lords are spread among the people of an area in accordance with their rank." See 79-81 and 106.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 106.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 107.

position for half a century was the silver Maria Theresa Dollar (MTD), introduced into the country by traders sometime between the end of the 18th and the early 19th century.”²³⁸

Yet, it would be a far-fetched reading to comprehend the imperial treasury without a discussion on embryonic public expenditure for which the institution was partly established. On the upkeep of the palace and the public works, the Emperor spent considerable sums of money in the period under discussion. As it is clearly described, “the sovereign was very much interested in buildings and in roads and considerable money must have been allocated. The Ethiopian government maintained schools and hospitals, mainly in the capital, and paid the salaries of their natives and non-native staff.”²³⁹ As it will be discussed, Yilma’s and other students’ expenses of education abroad were covered by the Emperor.²⁴⁰ The salaries, indeed, for men who “worked mostly at head quarters was paid by grants of land with the dues in kind and in labor owed by the *gābars* living on them.”²⁴¹ Generally, there was a different payment arrangement for foreigners in return to their services to the Ethiopian government. “The annual bill for the salaries of the European advisers, however, was paid in cash and the rates of disbursements were fantastic by Ethiopian standards of that period. Considerable amount of money also went to the army and the police forces with their expensive logistics.”²⁴²

In this regard, few words on an institution in charge of handling these activities are in order. The history of the Ministry of Finance between the period of its birth in 1907 and the Italian invasion in 1935 was essentially a history of ግንባ ቤት (*gimṣa bet*), meaning ‘imperial treasury’. *Gimṣa bet* was historically the imperial storehouse, and thus a part of the *Gibbi* [palace] compound. It

²³⁸ Befekadu Degefe, “The Making of...”:23.

²³⁹ Perham, *The Government of...*, 195-196.

²⁴⁰ Memoire of Yilma Dêrêssa, Private Collection of Yāmanā Ījṛgu Dāmīśé.

²⁴¹ Perham, *The Government of ...*, 196.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

was also known as ገምጃ ዋሽ (gimṣa wašša, ‘treasure cave’), a term hinting at the antiquity of the institution, or ገምጃ ደበና (gimṣa dābāna, ‘treasure tent’).²⁴³

Even prior to the formal establishment of the Ministry in the European fashion, we may say that the Ethiopian state had a relatively structured institution for financial and non financial resources management. It is difficult to find out the historical origin of the office of state treasury in the Ethiopian government. However, the traditional title በጅርገድ (bäḡirond) for the chief treasurer of a sovereign testifies that the resource of the ruler had been relatively administered centrally and “the title first appears in a land decree of the reign of asé Lībnā Dīngīl (r. 1508-40), as በዚህ ወገን (bāzir wāng). Starting at least from the reigns of ase Yohannés I and his son Iyasu I, however, the title and office of *bäḡirond* began to be given to highly born persons, including members of the royal family and their relatives.”²⁴⁴

At the dawn of the twentieth century, bearing the title of *Bäḡirond*, Mulugeta Yīgāzu joined Mīnilīk’s first cabinet as Minister of Finance. Briefly deposed a couple of years later suspected of involving in the saga of poisoning the emperor in 1909, Mulugéta Yīgāzu was succeeded by Yīgāzu Bāhābté in January 1914. After some three years, Mulugéta was appointed at the Ministry for the second time in 1917 and served as a *bäḡirond* for more than a year. Since August 1919 until the Italian invasion in 1935, the position was held subsequently by *dāgazmač* Habtä Mariam Bāyan, *bäḡirond* Zālāqā Agīdāw, *bäḡirond* Täklä Hawariyat Täklä Mariyam, *bäḡirond* Hailä-Wäldä Rufé and *bäḡirond* Fīqrä Sīlassé.²⁴⁵

²⁴³ Yīlma Dērēssa, *Yä Itiopia tarik...*, 36-37; Carmichael, “Gimṣa bet,” 741a.

²⁴⁴ Merid Wolde Aregay, “Bäḡerond,” in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 1 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003), 440b.

²⁴⁵ National Archive and Library Agency (Hereafter NALA), Folder No. 63.1.3.13

Before I proceed to the next section, I need to emphasize that absolutism is a system of transition that was headed by threatened nobility offering a breathing space for other classes, functionaries and interest groups for practical reasons (survival) as far as they serve the political formation and posed no challenge. As absolutist like some other states had been centuries before, the Ethiopian state had also its own historical particularity. Desalegn Rahmeto (1988) is correct in remarking that “each developing society possesses a social architecture” inherent to itself, and a self-developed political culture and both play an important role in determining the complexions of the state.”²⁴⁶ It was also an emerging political process that could not come to an end within decades. Almost all works on absolutism suggested, for instance, that the phenomenon in Europe itself took more than two centuries. With this summarized discussion on the meager historiography of absolutism in Ethiopia, I shall now turn my focus to the appraisal of the major historical developments of momentous impact on my subject of study.

2.2. Major Historical Developments

At the turn of the twentieth century the Ethiopian “empire-state was a reality.”²⁴⁷ The Emperor was secure and in full command of a well-defended empire.²⁴⁸ Until the period of the Emperor’s first stroke in 1906 which forced him and other influential authorities at the court to designate his grandson *liǧ* Iyasu, as a heir to the throne despite Iyasu’s minority in 1909, Minilik had been at the apex of his power. At the international arena, the “sovereign asserted, engaging in defensive battle, the independence of the state from menacing European colonial rule.”²⁴⁹ Internally, the

²⁴⁶ Desalegn, 465.

²⁴⁷ Addis, 52

²⁴⁸ Marcus, *The Life and ...*, 218.

²⁴⁹ Indeed, beyond the battle of Adwa which is the seal of victory, what really saved Ethiopia from falling under colonial rule was the determination with [state administration and diplomatic] heritage of national consciousness, ‘international recognition’, and political/diplomatic skill was developed to meet the new challenge. Rubenson, 399, 409 and 410; Bahru, *A History of...*79.

Emperor expanded his state in the south that “increased the financial means of his state and to a considerable extent also the recruiting base for his army. He taxed the new provinces heavily in gold and ivory and used much of the revenues to purchase arms and ammunition.”²⁵⁰

Among these provinces, in the west and southwest, “Wälläga was very rich in gold and ivory”²⁵¹ and had been “paying a burdensome tribute.”²⁵² Following its annexation to the Ethiopian Empire(ca. 1886), the central government divided Wälläga into three provinces: *Leeqaa Näqämtee* and its dependencies under the local ruler *Däğazmač Kumsa*(1889-1923), *Leeqaa Qélläm* under *Däğazmač Joté Tullu*, and Argo and Horro-Guduru, unlike the previous two, administered by officials directly appointed by Mīnilik.²⁵³ The advent of the central government had a repercussion on the evolution of the political system in the province. As Terefe argued “the extension of the influence and power of the Shoan *Negus* in 1880s checked expansionist tendencies entertained before by such families as those of Bākäré Godana and Joté Tulu, and thus temporarily stood against unity in Wälläga.”²⁵⁴ Until the relative autonomy of *Leeqaa Näqämtee* and *Leqa Qélläm* had decline gradually since 1910s markedly²⁵⁵, the governor of Argo had strong position in comparison with the two. “Each of the local administrative units in Wälläga exercised considerable power internally as if they were self-sufficient entities, and at the beginning both *Léqa Näqämté* and *Leqa Qélläm* were alone to manage their local affairs more or less as in the former days.”²⁵⁶

²⁵⁰ Rubenson, 398

²⁵¹ Terrefe Woldetsadik, “The Unification of Ethiopia (1880-1935) Wälläga,” *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 6, No. 1 (January 1968): 73.

²⁵² Alessandro Truilzi and Tesema Ta’a, (1996 E.C.)

²⁵³ Tesema, *The Political Economy*..., 92.

²⁵⁴ Terefe, 85.

²⁵⁵ Alessandro Truilzi and Tesema Ta’a, xxv. For instance, though the governor *Dajjazmach* Habtemariam Gebrezabher had some degree of autonomy, the collection of customs was taken over by Amhara officials in 1933. Perham, *The Government of*..., 308.

²⁵⁶ Tesema, *The Political Economy*..., 93.

Contrary to the cases of *Leeqaa* Näqämtee and *Leeqaa* Qéllām, the Oromo in and the surrounding area of Arġo had experienced new economic and political arrangements. “The creation of subservient relationships between the peasants and the soldiers at Arġo under *däğazmač* Dämissāw Näsibu with as many as 30,000 followers often exposed the farmers to arbitrary demands for all sorts of supplies.”²⁵⁷ Eventually, “as the central state apparatus strengthened its grip, Näqämtee and Qéllām too had become victims of the same system.”²⁵⁸

All in all, however, the center-periphery interactions are of multifaceted nature. In general, we can identify two remarkable features. On the one hand, the relationship between Addis Ababa and Wälläga was of annexation, economic exploitation and cultural domination.²⁵⁹ On the other hand, like in many other conquered provinces, there was also co-optation especially among the ruling aristocracies and elite families.²⁶⁰ A critical look at the role of three prominent Mäçça Oromo rulers and their followers, such as Kumsa Morāda, Joté Tulu and Ġūma Aba Ġifar, in the subsequent conquest of other provinces beyond their domain for the expansionist cause of the empire-in-making at Addis Ababa prove Charles Tilly’s (1985) generalization that “the agents of states in the course of war making, state making and protection, characteristically carry on extraction which is acquiring the means of war making, state making, and protection.”²⁶¹ Having

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 95.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ Alessandro Truilzi, *Salt, Gold and Legitimacy. Prelude to the History of a No-Mans Land Bela-Shangul, Wellega, Ethiopia (c.1800-1898)*, (Napoli, Instituto Universitario Orientale, 1981) ; Alessandro Truilzi and Tesema Ta’a, (1996 E.C.)

²⁶¹ Charles Tilly argued that on state formation during the age of absolutism in the west, “European governments reduced their reliance on indirect rule by means of two expensive but effective strategies: (a) extending their officialdom to the local community and (b) encouraging the creation of police forces that were subordinate to the government rather than to individual tools of dissident magnates. In between, however, the builders of national power all played a mixed strategy: eliminating, subjugating, dividing, conquering, cajoling, buying, as the occasions presented themselves. The buying manifested itself in exemptions from taxation, creations of honorific offices, the establishments of claims on the national treasury, and a variety of other devices that made a magnate’s welfare dependent on the maintenance of the existing structure of power.” See “War Making and State Making as Organized

examined critically how Léqa Näqämté used Addis Ababa to consolidate its own periphery, Alessandro Truilzi also clearly concluded that “the ensuing centre-periphery relationship was a dynamic relationship, the result of a mutual, if unbalanced, process of continuous adjustment to and compromise with the other party’s request.”²⁶² It is important to emphasize here that “the Wälläga aristocracy was to prove the most successful of the southern elite in integrating itself into the Ethiopian ruling class.”²⁶³ This interaction, in the later period of state centralization, was reinforced also by political marriages.²⁶⁴ For instance, *Lǧǧ* Iyasu, the uncrowned ruler of Ethiopia from 1911 to 1916 had married, among others, Askalä Mariam Joté, a daughter of a ruler of Qélläm Wälläga.²⁶⁵

As a result of the incapacitation of Emperor Mīnilik, uncertainty dominated court politics in Addis Ababa for almost a decade. How *Etégé* Ṭaytu was ousted in 1910 and, after not a long time, in what circumstances *Lǧǧ* Iyasu was deposed in 1916 almost certainly implies the underlying political values and practices of the Ethiopian absolutist state. In the case of Ṭaytu,

Crime,” in *From Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 175.

²⁶² Alessandro Truilzi, “Nekemte and Addis Ababa: dilemmas of provincial rule,” in *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia*, eds. Donham and Wendy James eds. (Cambridge/Oxford: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 51 and 67.

²⁶³ Bahru, *A History of ...*, 91.

²⁶⁴ Among few, yet, important works on political marriage in Ethiopia, a doctoral these by Heran Sereke-Brhan is commendable. See “Building Bridges, Drying Bad Blood: Elite Marriages, Politics and Ethnicity in 19th and 20th Century Imperial Ethiopia” (Phd Dissertation in History, Michigan State University, 2002). Heran wrote that “such dynastic alliances thus continued to carry their own political weight among the first generation of imperial descendants and regional nobility. A son and two daughters of the emperor’s [Haile Sellassie] were married to members of the Wälläga aristocracy: Seble Desta to Kassa Wolde Mariam, the son of Askale Jote; Ijigayehu Asfawossen to Fikre Sellassie Habte Mariam, the heir to Wellega’s traditional nobility whose sister Mahetsente was married to the emperor’s youngest son, Sahle Sellassie. In addition, Iskinder Desta was married to Sara Ammanuel, the daughter of Ato. Ammanuel Abraham, a Wellegan who had served as secretary at the legation in England in the years of exile and as a trusted minister and diplomat in various capacities. Ras Mesfin Silleshi married the Wellegan noble woman, W/zo. Yeshimebet Guma while her brother Col. Kenea was one time husband of the Crown Prince’s love interest, W/zo. Zeleka Tafese.” 197-198. Jan Hultin, “Rebounding Nationalism: State and Ethnicity in Wollega 1968-1976,” *Journal of the International African Institute*, 73, No. 3 (2003): 411.

²⁶⁵ Askala Maryam Jote is misrepresented as a Muslim woman and named Momina to strengthen the case against Iyasu. see Wolbert Smidt, “Anfillo ethnohistory,” in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol 1 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003), 263.

one can realize how crucial Šāwan hegemony in the imperial politics had been. In the case of Iyasu, it became clear that factors such as Orthodox Christianity, palace etiquette and foreign interest did play a central role in the then Ethiopian state. It is important to emphasize here that Taytu, Iyasu and other influential personalities in the early twentieth century and afterwards, including Yīlma Déréssa, lived and worked somewhat under these aspects of political culture.²⁶⁶

As the Emperor's physical powers faded, so did his control over the political system. Consequently, the government was run by certain powerful individuals who were organized under the Crown Council. Particularly, "Empress Taytu acted for her husband as the council's chairman and exploited the growing confusion by concentrating so much authority into her own hands that she became the *de facto* head of government."²⁶⁷ As her husband was suffering from repeated strokes, Taytu "assumed the role of the invalid monarch and made *Shum-Shir* (appointments and dismissal) to her taste."²⁶⁸ In doing so, she "constructed a party to ensure her future political ascendancy."²⁶⁹ In her commendable study on political marriage in Ethiopia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Heran remarked that Taytu's "role in politics was strongly supplemented and underscored by her artful management of marriage relations around the imperial court."²⁷⁰

However, Itégé Taytu could not remain powerful for long time and "arrayed against Taytu and her followers were Šāwan and assimilated leaders."²⁷¹ Opposition against her shows that regionalism did matter in the politics of the empire-state. "In view of her Gondar background,

²⁶⁶ Sydney Verba and Gabriel Almond, *The Civic Culture, Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Newbury Park: Sage Publication Inc., 1989).

²⁶⁷ Marcus, *The Life and...*, 235-236.

²⁶⁸ "Among those who fell victim to her policy were dāḡač Dāmīs of Wällāga, dāḡač Gäbrä Sillasé Barya Gabr of Adwa, Wagsum Abatā Buwayalāw and Nāgadrās Haile Giorgis Wäldä Mika'el," Bahru, *A History of...*, 117.

²⁶⁹ Marcus, *The Life and...*, 237.

²⁷⁰ Heran, 126.

²⁷¹ Marcus, *The Life and...*, 236.

her moves were interpreted as parts of a grand plan to restore the centrality of the north in Ethiopian politics.”²⁷² To make the long story short, the “Šāwan nobility could oust Taytu from state politics after her desperate attempts, including her appeal to European consuls to intervene in domestic politics, in order to retain her influence or to leave Shāwa for Gondar.”²⁷³ It is pertinent to recall here that as “Menelik ascended the throne in 1889, the policy of the Šāwan kings became the basis of his policy for the entire country, while the Šāwan Amhara nobility (specifically of Mānz, Tāgulāt, Bulga and Märhabété) was considered to have become the political elite of the Empire.”²⁷⁴ All exceptions considered, “the empire was Shoan, and Shoans also tended to hold the most important government posts. The structure of the government was therefore chiefly determined by the society and common value of the Šāwan Amharas, for other influences affected the government only within a framework which they had already laid down.”²⁷⁵

Soon after the Šāwan nobility ousted Taytu from court politics, the short yet dramatic reign of *Liǧ* Iyasu began. His radical measures and tendencies with all his behaviors that had been at odds with the palace etiquette, however, bred bitter resentment and indignation among powerful individuals in the establishment. He tended to “ignore the center and the north and concentrated his attention on the eastern part of the empire.”²⁷⁶ Without regard for his advisers, he made decisions that failed to take into account the social, the political, or the religious consequences.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 243-244

²⁷³ *Ibid.*; Bahru, *A History of ...*, 117-118.

²⁷⁴ Denis Nosnitsin, “Province of Šāwa,” in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig Vol. 4, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 557b.

²⁷⁵ Clapham, 4. “In the 1940s, among other measures, the then Minister of Pen, Walda-Giyorgis Walda-Yohannes assigned his own supporters, whom he considered competent, as provincial directors. It may be worth noting, however, that his appointees were recruited mainly from among the Šāwan Amhara.” Makonnen Tegegn, “Walda-Giyorgis Walda-Yohannes and the Haile Sellassie Government,” *Northeast African Studies*, 4, No 2 (1997) New Series: 110.

²⁷⁶ Marcus, *The Life and ...*, 270

He was not fond of the daily routine of government administration, choosing to visit provinces as well as peripheral regions and “attempting to construct a power base independent of the Shawan *makwanent*. His repeated failures to organize and attend palace banquets on Christian holidays also worried the priests.”²⁷⁷ To add insult to injury, “Iyasu once remained in a Muslim town over Easter.”²⁷⁸

The war in Europe and its effects in Ethiopia also crystallized opposition to *Liḡ* Iyasu for he showed his preference for the Central Powers.²⁷⁹ To the disappointment of the British and French diplomats at Addis Ababa, “he dispatched eight camel-loads of ammunition in October 1915 from Harär to Muhammad Abdullah, who led the Somali nationalist resistance struggle against the combined powers of Great Britain, Italy and Ethiopia from 1898 to 1920.”²⁸⁰ During one of his usual visits in Harärgé and Ogadén in 1916, significant nobilities were gathered in the capital to celebrate the annual imperial banquet of the Holy Cross. Upon their arrival, it was learnt that no preparations had been made by *Liḡ* Iyasu for the banquet. “On 12 September the Tripartite powers had sent a note to the Foreign Minister complaining about Iyasu’s activities supporting rebellion in Somaliland.”²⁸¹

Regardless of the validity of accusations against *Liḡ* Iyasu which was developed by the Šäwan nobility, it can be concluded that the allegation, predominantly dealing with religious breach,

²⁷⁷ In his relationship with powerful chiefs and nobilities, Iyasu was blamed for his arrogance, too. “On one occasion he had struck Habtä Giorgis in the face, which action has not tended to increase his respect among the followers of that powerful chief.” *Ras Abatä* became extremely displeased with the prince’s actions. See Marcus, *The Life and...*, 252-253.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 268

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 269-271.

²⁸⁰ Said Samatar, “Muhammad Abdallah Hasan,” in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 3 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 1045b.

²⁸¹ Marcus, *The Life and...*, 276.

signifies the very values and practices of the imperial state.²⁸² All in all, *Liḡ* Iyasu challenged the establishment imprudently and this cost finally not only his impending throne but also his life most probably at the eve of the Italian invasion in 1935. In the course of the coup d'état against Iyasu, a promising candidate for the throne was Täfäri Mäkönnin.²⁸³

After *Liḡ* Iyyasu was removed from state power in 1916, another political struggle began within the imperial establishment. "The years between *Liḡ* Iyyasu's downfall (1916) and Hailä Sillassé's coronation as emperor (1930) witnessed political competition between 'traditionalists' and 'progressives'."²⁸⁴ For about a decade and half, "the power struggle between the conservative/traditional forces and Tafari, assisted by the progressives, continued until the latter emerged absolutely victorious in 1930."²⁸⁵ During these years, especially intellectuals who had enjoyed foreign and domestic education so far were offered more socio-political spaces in the state. Consequently, their impact augmented in various aspects of government activities such as administration, diplomacy, legislation and opinion making.²⁸⁶ These government activities encompassed new political and administrative practices carried out by members of the emerging

²⁸² The thirteen allegations are i) failure to carry out the funeral of Mīnilik II, ii) his conversion to Islam and the killing of urban polices iii) his conversion to Islam and his marriage with Muslim families, iv) his refusal to visit churches in Harärgé and instead attending a mosque service, v) giving back the confiscated properties taken during the war of conquest in Harärgé from Christians back to Muslim svi) his favoring Arsi and Somali Muslims vii) Building a new mosque in Dire Dawa and attending mosque service dressing "like Muslims" whereas he declined to patronize a church and its clergy in Dire Dawa, viii) Forcing the clergy at Ġīg'ģīga to leave the parish and transferring the site to Muslims for the construction of a mosque, ix) Changing the emblem on the Ethiopian flag by inscribing in it "There is no God except Allah, Mohammed is the messenger of Allah" and sending it to the Turkish consulate x) drawing genealogical evidence up to 40 generations, and announcing that he was a Muslim person, xi) accusing a Muslim judge of drinking alcohol and forcing Christians to participate in the allegation xii) delivering 12 flags to Somali chiefs at Ġīg'ģīga on which the emblem reads "There is no God except Allah, Mohammed is the messenger of Allah" and xiii) a plan and preparation to declare religious war or *Jihad* against Europeans. Märs'e Hazän Wäldä Qirqos, *Yäzämān Tarik Tizitaye* (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 1994), 143-147.

²⁸³ Märs'e Hazän Wäldä Qirqos, *Yäzämān Tarik*..., 148.

²⁸⁴ Mekonnen, 95.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 97.

²⁸⁶ Bahru, *Pioneers of Change* ..., 162-207; Bahru Demisse, "The Role of the Progressives in Ethiopian Politics 1909-1930" (B. A. Thesis, in History HSIU, 1970).

social group who differ professionally from the warrior nobility of the conquest age. Addis Hiwet explained how this shift took place:

One of the most important consequences of the creation of the empire and the establishment of Addis Ababa as a political economic center was the gradual and definite reversal of the correlation of forces between these hitherto dominant elements. ...The Great Conquest-the creation of the empire-saw the consummation of war as a vocation. The post conquest period marks the definite decline of feudal baronage and the passage of historical initiative to the Ghibbi 'politicians', the court officials.²⁸⁷

These officials, as a result of their direct and indirect exposure to the practices of the outside world, became instrumental in initiating, implementing and controlling the gradual yet remarkable changes of immense impact to the existing socio-economic and political systems of the empire in such activities as finance, trade, communication, education, and administration. As vital as the period was, it is here that we find the various portrayals of the trend as 'reform', 'progress', and 'modernization'.

No matter how the gradual break with the past was remarkable, "Emperor Hailä Sillassé built upon the political and economic foundations laid by Mīnilik."²⁸⁸ The two elements of the absolutist state, old and new, therefore, represent the political formation of the period.²⁸⁹ That was how the establishment used to function and it continued so till 1974 determining the course of subsequent developments and shaped by events, too. The next section attempts to give a general picture about the major political institutions and practices in which my subject of the study acted and interacted especially since 1941.

²⁸⁷ Addis, 79.

²⁸⁸ Marcus, *The Life and...*, 281.

²⁸⁹ The relationship between these old and new elements has been an issue of scholarly debate in the historiography. As I have briefly discussed earlier, the old political system utilized the absolutist state as a "redeployed and recharged apparatus of feudal domination." Anderson, 18.

2.3. Institutions and Political Practices of the Ethiopian State

Yīlma Déréssa served the Imperial Government of Ethiopia under the authority, influence and circumstance of powerful rulers, old and new government institutions and political practices. Hence, a brief survey on these setting is helpful to situate especially his public life. “Central to the political formation was the monarch surrounded by ‘complex circles, old and new’”²⁹⁰ such as powerful ministers, members of parliament, the Crown Council, family members, advisers and the church. The palace (*Ghībi*) was really the core of state politics in the true sense of the word. The compound, with a surface area of approximately one *Gaša* oversees the slope of the town descending to the Rift Valley, and housed constituted especially different offices of the emperor, the imperial banquet hall, the offices of the Council of Ministers, Ministry of Pen and the Crown Council.²⁹¹ Generally, “the central agencies of government were gathered round the throne.”²⁹²

The Emperor ruled through a number of institutions, political and social groups as well as personalities at different times and circumstances. In particular, these included influential ministerial offices, parliament, councils and family members.²⁹³ Conversely, his ministers, members of the parliament, the Crown Council, family members, protégés, other higher and lower officials in his government, ordinary citizens had access to the monarch through age-old political institutions and practices. However, the interaction between the monarch and his functionaries was too complex to give a crystal-clear picture.

Especially for about fifteen years after liberation from the Italian occupation, the Ministry of Pen was a dominant office. It is important to emphasize that *Ṣāhfē Ti'az Wäldä Giorgis Wäldä*

²⁹⁰ Margery Perham, “Forward” in Clapham, xi.

²⁹¹ Mahtāmā Sillassé Wäldä Mäsqāl, *Zikrā Nāgār* (Addis Ababa: 1950 E.C.), 2-16.

²⁹² Clapham, 28.

²⁹³ Perham, *The Government of...*; Clapham, (1969); Mekonnen Tegegn, (1997); Seyoum Haregot, (2013); Angelo Del Boca (2012).

Yohannis who headed the Ministry was the most powerful person in the country save the Emperor.²⁹⁴ In an era when administrative centralization reached its apex, every imperial and political communication was under the control of *Ṣāḥfē Tī'zaz* (literally to mean 'writer of an order'). For a decade and half after liberation, "the Emperor entrusted Wäldä -Giyorgis with the promotion and implementation of structural reforms within both the central government apparatus and die provincial administration."²⁹⁵

Negarit Gazeta proclaimed that the Minister of Pen "was the holder of the great seal of the monarch and controlled the propaganda and information services as well as the government press."²⁹⁶ The Ministry under a *Ṣāḥfē Tī'zaz* not only facilitated every imperial and political communication but also supervised the censorship office which had been blocking out any criticism against the regime in any form including creative works.²⁹⁷ It was only the publications of university students which were excused from the high-handed media system of the imperial Ethiopia. The youth in the institutions of modern education in Ethiopia used to enjoy relative freedom as they were considered by the establishment as agents of change. This dynamics can be explicated mainly by the advent of modern education and expansion of urbanization in Ethiopia at the dawn of the twentieth century. Before this period, in Amhara culture which dominated the

²⁹⁴In addition to his position as a *Ṣāḥfē Tī'zaz*, Wäldä Giorgis Wäldä Yohannis also took over the Ministry of Interior (1943-1949) and Ministry of Justice (1949-1955). See Makonnen, 91-138.

²⁹⁵ Mekonnen, 109.

²⁹⁶*Negarit Gazeta* General Notice No 1 1941, May 10; *Negarit Gazeta* 2nd Year No. 5, Order No 1 of 1943, An Order to define the powers and duties of the Ministries. The title as well as the function of *Ṣāḥfē Tī'zaz* was known to recorded history in Ethiopia since the 17th century and it was designated as a Minister of Pen when Emperor Minilik II formed a quasi-modern cabinet for the first time in 1907. Sevir Chernetsov and Denis Nosnitsin, "Ṣāḥafē Tī'izaz," in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Vol. 4, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 460a-461a; Mahtāmā Sīlassē Wäldä Mäsqāl, 59-60, NALA, File Number, 63.1.29.14.

²⁹⁷ *Negarit Gazeta* No 37, 1943; *Negarit Gazeta*, 25th Year, No. 23, 1958 E.C NALA, File No. 5.1.1.01.

political system of the imperial government, adolescence scarcely exists as a concept, let alone as a challenging social group.²⁹⁸

Returning, then, to the discussion on the Ministry of Pen, “the roles which the *Tsahafi Taezaz* performed under Haile Sellassie far surpassed his historical function. Besides being the keeper of the great seal, he kept the records of all high appointments, promotions and demotions, and had the responsibility for the publication of all laws, decrees, and treaties.”²⁹⁹ Although a Prime Minister’s Office and a Council of Ministers had been set up in 1943, the dominating institution of the period was the Ministry of the Pen. The Minister was very close to the Emperor to the extent that “its operations were often quite indistinguishable from his own.”³⁰⁰ *Ṣahafē Tī’zaz* Wäldä-Giyorgis used the Ministry of Pen as a vehicle for promoting centralism and modernization in the government apparatus..³⁰¹ Mekonnen Tegegn argued that “lastly in 1955, the aristocrats and hardliners from the nobility stood against Walda Giorgis and served as key

²⁹⁸ Donald Levine (1965) is quite correct in pointing out that “in Ethiopia’s modernizing sector, society and the individual have been affected by numerous changes at once. Adult standards have become confused; available roles have multiplied beyond comprehension; new agents and techniques of secondary socialization have supplemented the old. Overnight, adolescence has become both a category and a challenge to the establishment. This was not because the youth represented a specific age-group in a society but mainly because they resided in the esteemed institutions-modern schools. Hence, as the result of the increasing prestige of modern education in 20th century, the educated youth (not all youth) had become eventually a social group that benefited special treatment from the government in the form of relative institutional autonomy.” See Donald Levine, *Wax and Gold Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), 2,96; Messay Kebede,(2008) listed various explanations for the relative autonomy that higher institutions in Ethiopia, like in other third world countries, enjoyed. “First, so long as student protests remain confined to campuses and do not spill over into other social sectors, dictatorial governments see no serious threat to their power. Second, the embedded link between academic freedom and higher education does not allow a purely repressive policy; short of closing universities, governments have no direct way to shield students from critical ideas. Third, governments acquire a bad reputation when they crack down on universities.” Messay Kebede, *Radicalism and Cultural Dislocation in Ethiopia, 1960-1974* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press. 2008), 9.

²⁹⁹ Spencer, 118.

³⁰⁰ Clapham, 22

³⁰¹ These included “public security, health, propaganda and information, banks, concessions and mineral rights, and municipalities.” Mekonnen, 111.

pressure group to topple him.”³⁰² Eventually, the Ministry of Pen and the Premiership came under the authority of one person.

Soon after the deposition of walda Giorgis, the role of the Ministry of the Pen was integrated into that of the Office of the Prime Minister. Obviously, the Council of Ministers was formed to all intents and purposes for foreign show that his government had a nature of permanence and continuity. “On 25 October, 1907, Emperor Menilek announced to the foreign powers that he was forming a cabinet. To this end, he worked out appointments for the various ministers and ordered the construction of a building for cabinet meetings across from the *elfiñ* and the egg house. Nine ministers were appointed, as was done in Europe.”³⁰³ The introduction of new political institutions “did not essentially affect the status, functions, and mode of operation of the officials, who continued to serve at the palace in their traditional role.”³⁰⁴ Christopher Clapham noted that “the cabinate had not formed the hub of the executive government. Its powers were only advisory, and the Emperor was not a member: he never attended regularly, and did so only on special occasions to add weight and sometimes publicity to the council’s deliberations.”³⁰⁵

³⁰² When Mekonnen attempted to trace the origin of the resentment of the nobility, he noted that “in 1942, Haile Sellassie promulgated a decree, drafted by Walda-Giyorgis, which regulated the duties and powers of the provincial governors-general and their staff, and set up new political subdivisions throughout the country. A year later, another decree defined the functions and powers of ministers and established the Council of Ministers and the Office of the Prime Minister. These decrees were crucially important in Ethiopian politics over at least the next decade and a half. Because they aimed at vesting political power in institutions rather than in individuals, they threatened the very base of the nobility’s power. As a result the decrees were central to and provided the main explanation for the power struggles between moderates (largely educated commoners) and conservatives (largely nobility/aristocrats) from 1947 to 1955.” Mekonnen, 110.

³⁰³ Marcus, *The Life and...*, 227.

³⁰⁴ Markakis, 260

³⁰⁵ Clapham, 126.

In terms of institutional distinctiveness, the Council of Ministers in the post-liberation period shows a clear difference from the previous one.³⁰⁶ “In place of the embryo departments of pre-war days, there is a whole range of ministries after 1941, specialized agencies and organs of government, which carry out their own defined functions in a way which would have been inconceivable even twenty years ago.”³⁰⁷ As to their authority, it is commented that “no Council of Ministers could do much when its members were all imperial nominees used to dealing directly with the throne. The Council of Ministers also had to take account of the fact that each of its members had individual access to the throne.”³⁰⁸ In other words, “appointed by the Emperor, ministers were individually responsible to him for the administration of their departments and opinions submitted to the monarch.”³⁰⁹ Collectively too, “the Council obviously had nothing to say on matters which came within the scope of the Emperor’s attention.”³¹⁰

Historical developments seem to have created some pressures to make a reform in the position and role of the Council of Ministers in the Imperial Government of Ethiopia. For instance, “a more far-reaching attempt at amendment took place in 1961, when a Committee on Constitutional Revision was among the committees on possible reforms set up after the

³⁰⁶ *Negarith Gazeta*, Order No. 1, 1943. Margery Perham emphasized the significant position of two ministries among the twelve ministries. “The duty of the Minister of the Interior is to ‘supervise security’ throughout the Empire, and the provincial administration and police are under his orders. The character and the great importance of this ministry will be more fully understood when we turn to a consideration of the provinces. The Ministry of the Pen represents,” as I have already discussed, “the development of the ancient office of *Ṣāhafē-Ti’izaz*. The minister’s duties are to keep the Great Seal, to act as registrar of births, marriages and deaths in the royal family; to be keeper of the archives; to issue the Gazette and other official documents’ to coordinate the work of the ministries; to supply the official liaison with the parliament and to supervise the court established under article 54 of the constitution for the trial of administrative offences.” Perham, *The Government of...* 91.

³⁰⁷ Clapham, 183.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁹ Markakis, 260

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 267.

attempted *coup d'etat* of the previous December [1960].”³¹¹ With the intention of developing a government system that would address emerging political problems, the Constitutional “committee was mostly concerned with the relations between the Emperor, the Prime Minister and ministers. It recommended that the function and position of the Head of State should be separated from those of the Head of Government, but all in vain.”³¹² Some years later, however, based on the new proclamation that reestablished the Council of Ministers, “the powers of the Council were enlarged to include the making of decisions, with the stipulation that 'matters of policy' still have to be submitted to the Emperor. Formally the 1966 order did little to clarify the jurisdictional ambiguity involving this body.”³¹³ All in all, however, “the ministers stood at the peak of the central government hierarchy, and provide the chief link between the Emperor and the nineteen executive ministries; they together make up the Council of Ministers, and they perform much the same administrative functions as their equivalents anywhere in the world.”³¹⁴

Like the ministerial system, Parliament in Ethiopia was also a novel political institution which Emperor Hailä Sillassé introduced with the first constitution in 1931.³¹⁵ This new political institution was established “first as an institution whose inspiration as foreign and not Ethiopian, and second, as an appendage to the executive government, rather than as one of the basic repositories of the authority of the state.”³¹⁶ The functions of the parliament are almost wholly covered by article 34 of the constitution which declares 'no law may be put into

³¹¹ Clapham, 42.

³¹² As Christopher Clapham pointed out “according to the proposal, the Emperor should select the Prime Minister, who would then choose his own ministers, and present them to the Emperor for formal installation. It also proposed that the Council of Ministers should become an executive instead of an advisory body, and that the Prime Minister should exercise a number of executive powers in the name of the Emperor.” *Ibid.*

³¹³ Markakis, 266-267.

³¹⁴ Clapham, 98.

³¹⁵ Täklä Hawaryat Täklä Maryam, (1998 E.C.):Perham, *The Government of...*, 95.

³¹⁶ Clapham, 140.

force without having been discussed by the Chambers and having obtained the confirmation of the Emperor.' The structure of parliament is briefly defined in the constitution and it was bicameral. The Senate, as defined in article 31, was to consist of members appointed by the Emperor from among the nobility 'who have for a long time served his Empire as Princes or Ministers, Judges or high military officers'. "The deputies, 'until the people are in a position to elect them themselves' were to be nominated by the nobility and the local chiefs. Rather surprisingly the deputies were at first fewer in numbers than the Senators."³¹⁷

Predictably, the power of the monarch cast its minatory shadow on the parliament. He, for instance, convened and dissolved the chambers and draws up their procedure. The whole reserve of absolute power lay with the Emperor. Ministers could not attend sessions of the parliament without his permission. In spite of the jurisdiction of the parliament, "the emperor continued to issue his own decrees as he did before the inauguration of parliament, and it has not appeared to be of great importance whether the nominated chambers went through the form of confirming them or not."³¹⁸ However, it is difficult to consider the parliament totally "as a rubber stamp for the sovereign interest."³¹⁹

With changing circumstances, the significance of Parliament increased gradually in the legislative regime especially since the 1950s. For instance, "a basic change effected by the

³¹⁷ Perham, *The Government of...*96

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 96-97.

³¹⁹ "There is also evidence that Parliament took its legislative duties seriously, a few cases of parliamentary opposition to the executive have been reported from the 1940s, and in the 1950s it made frequently though usually minor, amendments to legislation. It introduced flogging as a punishment into the Penal Code of 1957; and in the Electoral Law Proclamation of 1956, it deleted a phrase allowing the Electoral Board to make *awajjoch* or Proclamations on the ground that these required 'parliamentary approval, and amended the conditions on residences for voters since the original draft was unconstitutional. A readiness to reject laws is indicated by the Federal Tax (Amendment) Proclamation of 1955, the preamble of which refers to imperial approval of the resolution of the Senate alone, implying that the Chamber of Deputies passed a different resolution which was rejected by the executive, while in 1956 a bill on forest conservation was so amended through the influence of the landowners in Parliament that the government refused to accept it." Clapham, 142.

1955 constitutional revision was the introduction of the representative principle for the Chamber of Deputies, whose members became elective on the basis of universal adult suffrage. The Senate remained an appointed chamber reserved for the nobility and high official.”³²⁰ In accordance with the Revised Constitution of 1955, “the Chamber of Deputies has since 1957 been elected by universal adult suffrage, and has thus for the first time achieved a power base independent of the Emperor; but the senate remained directly appointed by him.”³²¹ Slightly different politically from the Chamber of Deputies, “the senate clearly has a useful potential function in the representation of elite groups, such as the nobility, the armed forces, the high officials and the intelligentsia, to balance a first chamber based simply on popular suffrage.”³²²

With the passage of time, the new political institution in the Imperial Government of Ethiopia “also gained substantive legislative powers: initiating and sanctioning legislation, summoning ministers for questioning and in exceptional circumstance initiating proceedings for impeachment. The Emperor too, could initiate and veto laws, as well as could dissolve parliament.”³²³ Particularly, it “has also improved its position in the fiscal matters; the chambers could examine the budget in detail and in advance. As Parliament was given the right to summon ministers to answer questions before it,”³²⁴ the “tendency of ministers to visit Parliament in person grew, instead of leaving it to deputies, and several of them, including Yilma Déréssa at the Ministry of Finance, took pains to be conciliatory.”³²⁵

³²⁰Markakis, 277-278.

³²¹Clapham, 142.

³²²*Ibid.*, 151.

³²³*Ibid.*, 142.

³²⁴Markakis, 278.

³²⁵Clapham, 147-148.

Somewhat new in terms of its institutional form like the parliament and the Council of Ministers, and partly old in terms of its practice, the Crown Council was also another institution which played vital role in the politics of the absolutist state. Though it was formally established by Article 70 of the 1955 Revised Constitution (the duties of which were not defined) the function of Crown Council as a political practice was an age-old institution in Ethiopian history. "Due to their closeness to the crown, in the past members of the Crown Council had informal advisory functions."³²⁶ The Crown Council was an important "policy-making body and as such the central focus of power under the Emperor."³²⁷

Based on the royal request, the Council "advised the Emperor on matters of state, yet the Council did not form part of the imperial secretariat; but the two had a certain amount in common as traditionally-based bodies closely attached to the Emperor."³²⁸ In its formative years during the reign of Emperor Hailä-Sillassé, aristocrats dominated the Council except *Ras* Īmīru.³²⁹ The Crown Council was working "in an *ad hoc* manner" and "did not have a permanent office." Either the Emperor, or a member designated by the Emperor, was to preside over the

³²⁶ Clapham remarked that "the Council was more likely to have taken a fairly passive role than to have played any active part in policy-making. Such a traditionally-based body would be better suited to the evaluation of suggestions than to making them itself, and it is unlikely that one so devoted as the Emperor to weakening the power of the nobility would have given a council of noblemen any greater share in the decision-making process than the needs of consensus demanded. Further, though the members of the Council were all of high prestige in the country at large, few of them were of a caliber to stand up to the Emperor within the government." 124. See also Smidt, 821b; Clapham, 124 and Markakis, 277.

³²⁷ John Spencer, for instance, recalled that in their drafting of a new Ethiopian constitution, they were forced by the Crown Council to stress the prerogatives of the Crown. 257. See also Täklä Hawaryat Täklä Maryam (1998 E.C); Perham, *The Government of...*, 89.

³²⁸ Clapham, 123.

³²⁹ It noted that the senior member was the *Īčägé*, the senior cleric who later became Archbishop who used to attend almost all the meetings. The *Rases*, Kassa and Seyum and *Ras Bitwädäd* Mäkönnin Īndalkačäw, the Prime Minister were other constant members, but the Emperor called councilors as he thought fit in relation to the subject of discussion. Clapham, 123-124; Perham, *The Government of...*, 89.

Crown Council.³³⁰ It is common in the literature, to identify the members of the Crown Council as ‘aristocrats’, ‘conservatives’, ‘traditional elites’, ‘dignitaries’ and ‘hard-liners’.³³¹

In the later period of the imperial reign, however, the membership profile of the Crown Council showed noticeable change. Following the deaths of some prominent members of the council since 1956, distinguished ex-officials, mainly without aristocratic background, were appointed to it. Eventually the Council “lacked the prestige of its predecessor, despite the presence of *Ras Emiru* and Lieutenant-General Abiy Ababa, and it may have been re-created to provide a place of dignified retirement for senior politicians.”³³²

If the Ministry of Pen, the Council of Ministers, the Parliament and the Crown Council constituted the major political institutions of the Imperial Government of Ethiopia, the court traditions of *Guday Maqräbiya*(*Aqabé Sä’at*) and *Däğ Īinat* had been important political practices of the government through which Ato Yilma Déréssa had lived and worked. Situated at the very hub of the above-mentioned socio-political formation, “Haile-Selassie ruled from the palace, and there is no better place to understand [how] his government worked than the old red-roofed palace of Menilek, which stands a living monument to the continuity of imperial rule.”³³³ The palace had its own thorough and effective court traditions through which the Emperor could interact formally and informally with his ministers, members of the Crown Council, parliament, and his other subordinates. “Being the nerve-center of national politics,”³³⁴ the palace was definitely the very site of a complex political decision making process. As a pioneer scholar of political culture remarked, in the Ethiopian political system [during the

³³⁰ Seyoum Haregot, 49-50.

³³¹ Christopher Clapham(1969); John Markakis(1974); Mekonnen Tegegn(1997); John Spencer(1984); Wolbert Smidt(2003)

³³² Clapham, 125.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 28.

³³⁴ Shimelis, 23.

imperial period], like that of Japan, Turkey and Egypt, there was a “fundamental congruence between the content of various socialization processes and the existing political culture.”³³⁵ No better political practice explains this fact than court tradition.

Given the prerogatives of the monarch over almost all formal and informal institutions of the government, frequent contact was unavoidable. “All the ministers reported to him regularly on the state of their departments, and referred to him decisions which needed his approval. This was done partly in writing and partly through interviews.”³³⁶ During the conversation with the emperor “some of the officials spent considerably longer times there than in their offices, and whenever the Emperor attended an official function, a bevy of ministers surrounded him.”³³⁷ Besides the ministers, other government officials “reported directly to the Emperor. A few key officials have an entree to the Emperor at any hour of day or night.”³³⁸

However, these visits were not gratuitous and arbitrary meddling.³³⁹ Historically, Ethiopian emperors had an *Aqqabé Sä’at* (lit. ‘keeper of hours’) for ecclesiastical and state businesses.³⁴⁰ A document from the archive of the Ministry of Finance indicates that a schedule was prepared based on the emperor’s order in June 1942 to avoid fortuitous visits by officials at the palace.³⁴¹

³³⁵ Lucian W. Pye, “Political Culture,” In *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, ed. Sills David, (USA: Crowell Collier and MacMillan, Inc.1968), 219.

³³⁶ Informants: Bättru Admasé, Bulča Dämäqsa, Bīrhanā Déréssa; Clapham, 53.

³³⁷ Clapham, 52

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

³³⁹ The Ethiopian state had a long tradition for palace custom which were instrumental to the political socialization to the extent that it had a particular document known as *sär’atä māngəst*. “*Sär’atä māngəst* is the generic title for a group of secular writings concerning court rituals and [procedures], royalty (kingship, devine), hierarchy appointment and privileges of dignitaries. Likely to reflect more ancient customs, the nucleus of the *Sär’atä māngəst* might have emerged under Amdä Šion (r. 1314-1344) and been elaborated later.” See Denis Nosnitsin, “*Sär’atä māngəst*,” in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 4, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 632b-634b.

³⁴⁰ Steven Kaplan, “Aqqabe sä’at” in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. I, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003), 292.

³⁴¹ Wäldä-Giorgis Wäldä-Yohannīs to the Minister of Finance, Ginbot 30, 1935 E.C. Ref. No. 1789, File No. Not given, File Name “Sile Manačäwīm”, Folder No. A 5377-5446, ŠM, MOFED.

According to a copy of a document sent to *Ato* Yilma Déréssa, specific time was allocated for all Ministries, offices, councils, other institutions and individuals from Monday morning to Saturday afternoon to discuss with the Emperor at the Mīnilik Palace and Gānātā Lī'ul Palace.³⁴² In the letter, *Ṣāhafé Tizaz Wāldā*-Giorgis Wāldā-Yohannīs announced that the schedule would be effective as of Sāne 1, 1935 E.C. Especially in the later period of the Emperor's reign, the Prime Minister, Yilma Déréssa himself and some others visited the palace regularly to carry out various government businesses. "Attendance varied greatly according to the individual and his relations with the Emperor, though for ministers it was partly formalised through the regular weekly appointments known as *Aqqabé Sā'at*."³⁴³

Individuals and officials presented by *dāḡ Agafari* could meet the emperor through the customary political practice of *dāḡ ṭīnat*.³⁴⁴ *Dāḡ ṭīnat*, literally means 'waiting at the gate', that is to say, a regular appearance of demoted officials or disgraced dignitaries in the compound of the palace every morning to show their loyalty and submissiveness to the Emperor so that he would give them jobs, promote them to a higher state position and do whatever favour they sought

³⁴² Every Mondays morning at Mīnilik Palace, from 10:00 A.M to 12:00 P.M. petitioners presented by *dāḡ agafari*; from 12:00 P.M. to 1:00 P.M. miscellaneous; Every Mondays Afternoon at *Gānātā- Lī'ul* Palace from 4 P.m. to 4:30 P.M. Ministry of Interior; from 4:30 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. Ministry of War; from 5:00 P.M. to 5:30 P.M. Ministry of Finance; from 5:30 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. Ministry of Education. Every Tuesdays Morning at Mīnilik Palace from 10:00 A.M to 1:00 P.M. fatherless Children and ladies; Every Tuesdays afternoon at *Gānātā- Lī'ul* Palace from 4:00 P.M. to 4:30 P.M. Mayor[Addis Ababa?]; from 4:30 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. Senate; from 5:00 P.M. to 5:30 P.M. Chamber of Deputies; Every Wednesdays morning at Mīnilik Palace from 10:00 A.M to 12:00 P.M. Treasurer and Governorate-Generals presented by Ministry of Interior; from 12:00 P.M. to 1:00 P.M. miscellaneous; Every Wednesdays Afternoon at *Gānātā- Lī'ul* from 4:00 P.M. to 4:30 P.M. Ministry of Foreign Affairs; from 4:30 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. Ministry of Trade; from 5:00 P.M. to 5:30 P.M. Ministry of Post; from 5:30 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. Ministry of Agriculture. Every Thursdays mornings at *Gānātā- Lī'ul* Palace, from 10:00 A.M to 10:30 A.M Ministry of Works; from 10:30 to 11:00 A.M Ministry of Justice; The rest of the day again at the *Gānātā- Lī'ul* Palace allocated to writing task and developing memorandum; Every Fridays Morning at Mīnilik Palace from 10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. Military commanders through Ministry of War presented by *dāḡ agafari*; Every Fridays Afternoon from 4:00 P.M. to 4:30 P.M. Mayor[Addis Ababa ?]; From 4:30 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. Miscellaneous. Every Fridays in a fortnight from 10:00 to 1:00 P.M. imperial court for homicide and political criminals presented by High Court and Political Court. Every Saturdays morning at the *Gānātā- Lī'ul* Palace from 10:00 A.M. to 11:00 P.M. Clergy; From 11:30 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. Rīst(Land Holding)Department; From 12:00 P.M. to 1:00 P.M. Crown Council.

³⁴³ Clapham., 52.

³⁴⁴ NALA, File No. 1.1.17.05; File No. 62.1.01.13; *Bīrhanīna Sālam*, 1st Year 1 No. 21, Ginbot 13, 1917 E.C.; Informants: Bīrhanā Déréssa and Asfaw Damtē

from his majesty. This political tradition was carried out and supervised duly by several palace personnel organized hierarchically.³⁴⁵ If the Emperor was in the palace compound, there would be certainly a *däḡ ḡinat*. Retired officials still remember that people used to spend a negligible period of time every morning in the palace due to the significance of *däḡ ḡinat*.³⁴⁶ Attendance at the *däḡ ḡinat* did require patience worthy of the *agafari*'s admiration and notice. Though a short period *däḡ ḡinat* experience of some high government official is mentioned as an example, documents from national archive and library agency show that people had spent time in *däḡ ḡinat* for as long as twelve years.³⁴⁷

The political practice of the royal schedule (*Aqqabé Sä'at* or *Guday Maqräbia*) indicated that "the Emperor's most important function had been to provide a single source of legitimate authority, for this alone ensured the stability which was needed for the exercise of the other functions of government."³⁴⁸ No political practice explains more the state of the branches of modern government in Ethiopia than the royal schedule. As a final point, it needs to be emphasized that the attempt of the absolutist state to run modern institutions within the

³⁴⁵Käbädä Tässäma, *Yätarik Mastawäša* (Addis Ababa:1970), 100-114; Mahtämä Sillassé, 18-34. To ensure that every one was behaving in accordance with the intended manner, the emperor appointed a high-ranking imperial palace official with a ministerial portfolio. A notable's presence at or absence from *däḡ ḡinat* was easily recognized by the *ligaba* (lit. chamberlain) or by his subordinate, *agafari*. Both were responsible for the proper implementation of *däḡ ḡinat*. They recorded the names, the social background of attendants and their requests or appeals. See, NALA File No. 62.1.01.13. These recordings served as crucial inputs for the Emperor's decision. The *ligaba* the *agafari*, and the *əffīn askälkay* were powerful officials in the palace compound because stood between the sovereign and the attendant. The *ligaba* and his numerous assistants in the palace supervised even the slightest gestures, languages and movements of attendants in the presence of the Emperor. The *ligaba* or the *agafari* were extremely status-conscious and had a great concern even for the manner in which the Emperor was greeted. With regard to the manner of saluting the emperor, for example, all dignitaries were not of equal status. Those close to him were allowed to kiss his feet (shoes), then followed others who were allowed to bow and kissed the carpet, and the rest had permission to kiss the uncovered floor beyond the carpet. Informants: Bīrhanä Déréssa, December, 2013, Habtä-Sillassé Tafässä, March, 2014, Asfaw Damtē, April, 2014.

³⁴⁶ Emmanuel, 60.

³⁴⁷Markakis, 242. Whenever there was a *däḡ ḡinat*, the bottom of the hill where the palace is located used to glitter with parked cars cooking in the sun; even the outer compound is packed with petitioners, and favored individuals ascending to the higher levels. Christopher Clapham, p.29. In 1956, for instance, over 140 notables and ordinary citizens had frequented the palace for *däḡ ḡinat*. NALA, File No. 1.1.17.05.

³⁴⁸ Clapham, 58.

framework of traditional practices would end up finally with the political calamity that would lead to the replacement of new political values and practices.³⁴⁹

2.4. Tensions in the Imperial State

Though difficult to sketch out, based on distinct social position and political interest, the tensions and rivalries existed among the aristocrats, the educated technocrats, parliament members and other personalities whose formal and informal involvement in the imperial government mattered a great deal.³⁵⁰ The tensions were multifaceted, usually the eminent progressive-conservative antagonism overshadowing other lesser, latent and unvoiced rivalries. Other than the progressive-conservative hostility, for instance, the Ethiopian absolutist state experienced threatening regionalism with its age-old centrifugal tendency even in the course of its rigorous centralization endeavor since 1941.³⁵¹

Not to forget the remarkable resistance against the establishment from peasants as an oppressed class manifested itself sometimes with an ethnic and/or religious façade,³⁵² there had been ethnic tensions within the various absolutist state apparatuses.³⁵³ Among these tendencies, the relatively longstanding smoldering resentments in Tigray and Eritrea on the one hand, and the gradual emergence of Oromo consciousness coupled with grievances within the state apparatuses. The whole saga of the Mäccaa and Tuläma Association exemplify how the politics of recognition,

³⁴⁹ According to Edmond Keller, "once the revolutionary act of overthrowing the *ancien regime* has been accomplished, revolutionaries must able to establish themselves as a legitimate, new government in the eyes of the majority of the population through a new, viable, and legitimate social myth." See *Revolutionary Ethiopia: From Empire to People's Republic* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 8,191-212.

³⁵⁰ Addis(1975); Bahru "Haile Sellasse from...":Mekonnen(1997); Bulcha, *My Life My ...*:Seyoum(2013).

³⁵¹ Clapham, 75-82; Markakis, 361-393.

³⁵² Gebru Tareke(1991).

³⁵³ Olana Zoga, *Gizitinna g'izot*. (Addis Abäba 1985 E.C.); Markakis(1974).

especially with regard to the Oromo, had eventually become a phenomenon that had to be reckoned with not only within the government circle but also at the state level.³⁵⁴

This assortment of class, regional, ethnic and other interest groups in a single political formation (absolutist state) even led scholars to assume that “the basic condition of the old absolute monarchy’ was ‘an equilibrium (*Gleichgewicht*) between the landowning aristocracy and the bourgeoisie’.”³⁵⁵ In Ethiopian context, this may be explained most often as an affair between the conservatives and the progressives.³⁵⁶ All things considered, these classes and interest groups never existed in harmony in the Imperial Government of Ethiopia. Indeed this was one of the characteristic features of an absolutist state. Anderson argued that “absolutism in no way excluded that tension which seemed to them inherent in the State and altered none of their ideas of government.... The State was like a baroque church in which a great number of different conceptions mingle, clash and are finally absorbed into a single magnificent system.”³⁵⁷ No wonder, then, that in the baroque-like political formation of the absolutist state, one would find different and antagonistic classes such as the emerging bourgeoisie, the aristocracy from various provinces, and modern bureaucratic personnel with social backgrounds of diverse nature. Explaining the internal essence of the Ethiopian absolutist state, Gebru Tareke also remarked that “Absolutism was an imperfect amalgam of new and old

³⁵⁴ Edmond J. Keller, “The Ethnogenesis of the Oromo Nation and Its Implications for Politics in Ethiopia,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 33, No. 4, (December 1995): 627-628; Olana, (1985 E.C.) Gemechu Taye, “The History of Macha Tulama Association,” (B.A. thesis, Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 1993). Donald Donham, “Old Abyssinia and the New Ethiopian empire: themes in social history,” in *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia*, eds. Donham and Wendy James (Cambridge/Oxford: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3-48; Markakis, 1974; Clapham (1969); Bulcha, *My Life My...*

³⁵⁵ Anderson, 15-16

³⁵⁶ Addis Hiwet, 1975; Bahru, 1994; Mekonnen Tegegn, 1997.

³⁵⁷ Anderson, 96-97. R. w. Harris (1964) also wrote that “some art critics urge that the term [baroque] should be reserved strictly for use in architecture and sculpture, where it can be given more precise definition. Yet this too is unsatisfactory, argued Harris, for the architecture and sculpture of the period are closely related in spirit to much of the literature, painting, and indeed the whole philosophy of life of the seventeenth century. Baroque art was characterized by restlessness, instability, mobility. Pre-occupation with the fleeting moment is seen throughout Baroque art.” 59-61.

politics it was an order in which a new set of central institutions, apolitical relationships, and sources of power were grafted onto the pre-existing social structure.”³⁵⁸ It is noted earlier that the absolutist state was “a redeployed and recharged apparatus of feudal domination.”³⁵⁹ When we examine the supremacy of the conservatives through, for instance, the upper house of the parliament on fundamental political and economic issues such as land reform, it is clear to which group sovereign of the political system lent a hand.³⁶⁰

Interestingly enough, in the same way, the crisis of Ethiopia's experiment with modernization is also represented in the urbanization of Addis Ababa.³⁶¹ As will be discussed briefly in the following paragraphs, Addis Ababa, “as a national urban space”,³⁶² is actually a paramount environmental setting with all its multifaceted changes and continuities, for the life and works of Yïlma Déréssa.

³⁵⁸ Gebru Tareke, 45-46.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

³⁶⁰ All things considered, the rulers of this political formation were extremely resistant to any reform or change that would lessen the feudal privileges in any case. In spite of their marginal position as far as the day-to-day business of the government is concerned, the members of the Senate and Crown Council had been influential block in state politics. Clapham wrote that “Haile-Selassie consulted the Council over any important step which aimed at, for instance, maintaining national unity in a period of change.” See 124. In 1964 draft legislation regulating agricultural tenancy was permanently blocked in the Senate. See Markakis, 287. Seyoum Haregot on his part noted that “by February 1974, the position of the Crown Council had reached such a level of importance that the Prime Minister was inviting council strongmen to join in the deliberations of the Council of Ministers. Thus when the Council of Ministers was deliberating whether to abolish earlier enacted fuel price increases, *Ras* Asrate, Lt. General Abiye Abebe, the Chairman of the Senate and member of the Crown Council, and other Crown Council members were invited to join the Council of Ministers. The members of the Council of Ministers looked at the whole affair with incredulity. Again on February 26, 1974, when the Council of Ministers, under the chairmanship of the Emperor, met to consider the situation of the Second Division of the Ethiopian Army's rebellion in Eritrea, members of the Crown Council were invited to participate.” See also on page 50.

³⁶¹ Shimelis, 2011.

³⁶² *Ibid.*

2.5. Environmental Setting

Because “Addis Ababa’s early history was marked by an air of impermanence”,³⁶³ essentially, the city came to reality in the twentieth century. In this century, the capital experienced remarkable physical and social changes.³⁶⁴ Not to forget the changes that has local feature, “the spaces of the city, its streets, its architecture, its neighborhoods, and the day to day lives of its residents display the profound presence of the ways of the West.”³⁶⁵

That said, the ways of the West were not and still are of a completely prevalent. At its formative age, for instance, the palace (*Gibbi*), the church (St. George) and the market (*Arada*) respectively marked “the loci of government, culture, and economy and the nuclei of settlements.”³⁶⁶ Addis Ababa evolved from *Säfärs* which “originally (and conventionally) referred to the settlements of the nobility, their retinues, and palace servants. Its meaning which was encampment and therefore temporary, implied impermanence of occupation.”³⁶⁷ Besides the *Säfärs* that signified the localities of particular settlements in Addis Ababa, “rivers that traversed the city continued to serve as mental references of place as well as actual physical boundaries in the city.”³⁶⁸ With the passage of time, as Bahru Zewde wrote, “the transient status of Addis Ababa as a capital city

³⁶³ Bahru, “Early Safars of Addis Ababa: Patterns of Evolution,” in *Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Centenary of Addis Ababa*, November 24-25, 1986, eds. Ahmed Zekaria, Bahru, and Taddese Beyene (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa City Council, 1987), 2.

³⁶⁴ Peter P. Garretson, *A History of Addis Ababa from its foundation in 1886 to 1910* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000); “Even 20 years after her establishment [in 1886], there was still a real possibility of a move of the capital westward to Addis Alām. For instance, from 1900 to 1902 there was a distinct slowing down of building programs in the capital, because of Mēnilēk’s efforts to create a new capital some 40 km to the west of A.A. at Addis Alām, where forests were plentiful and there was more wood for fuel and building purposes. Foreign and internal opposition to the move was so fierce that Mēnilēk finally decided to remain in Addis Ababa.” Peter Garretson, “History of Addis Ababa,” in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig Vol. 1, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003), 80b-82a.

³⁶⁵ Shimelis Bonsa, “Urbanizing a Nation: Addis Ababa and the Shaping of the Modern Ethiopian State 1941 -1975” (PhD Dissertation in History, UCLA, 2011), 80-81.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

³⁶⁷ Shimelis, 110.

³⁶⁸ Bahru, “Early Safars...” 4.

invited diverse local and foreign communities to settle permanently.”³⁶⁹ From customary manner of administration, “the city administration overtime evolved into a properly municipal one.”³⁷⁰ Before the municipal administration evolved in the direction of the ways of the west, its administration “was an extension of the palace (*Ghibbi*) administration, as evidenced by the titles of the first two governors: *Azaž* Güzaw and *Azaž* Mataferia. Then followed the intermediate stage, marking the crucial importance of Arada: the “mayor” of the city was *nägadras* Hayle Giyorgis.”³⁷¹ Eventually, its *Kätäma* character as a result of this settlement pattern reflecting the formation of military encampment fizzled out. In this regard, the completion of the railway line that connected the coast with the interior of the country had a profound effect on the city. It was responsible for much of the growth of the country’s foreign trade.³⁷² Consequently, the physical and the social composition of Addis Ababa in the 1920s and early 30s demonstrate a noticeable disparity from that of the period of its foundation.³⁷³

During the short period of Italian occupation, like many towns of the country, “Addis Ababa experienced many changes and the political center moved farther to the south, to the present Hilton-Foreign Ministry-National Palace-ECA quadrangle.”³⁷⁴ By the time of liberation in 1941, the imperial regime of Hailä Sillassé inherited not just the practice, and relics, of Italian colonial planning but the ideology of planning as well, with the significant exception of its racial

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 12

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*

³⁷² Shiferaw Bekele, “The Railway, Trade, and Polity: A Historical Survey (1896-1935),” (MA Thesis in History, Addis Ababa University, 1982), 162.

³⁷³ Richard Pankhurst, “The Foundation and Growth of Addis Ababa to 1935,” *Ethiopia Observer*, 6, No. 1 (1962): 33-61.

³⁷⁴ Bahru, “Early Safars...”, 13-14.

component. “For the imperial monarchy, Italian spatial experiments represented both a challenge and an opportunity.”³⁷⁵

The period between the 1940s to the Ethiopian Revolution “marked the most rapid period of expansion in Addis Ababa’s history.”³⁷⁶ It was during these two and half decades that public buildings, private villas and roads were constructed through a conscious state project to make Addis Ababa a national and modern urban center.³⁷⁷ In effect, the city could accommodate inhabitants other than the natives as “manufacturing industries owned and managed mostly by foreigners increased in number. Addis Ababa became more and more cosmopolitan and increasingly not just a national and regional centre but also an international one.”³⁷⁸

Along with its infrastructural expansion, the city has become a space where societal intermingling took place because it “continued to be the major national centre for the assimilation of ethnic groups. The major ethnic groups in the capital still were the Amhara, the Oromo, the Tégray, the Gurage and the Dorze. Some Oromo in Addis Ababa assimilated mostly into the dominant Amhara culture. Rural to urban migration changed the demographic landscape of the city.”³⁷⁹ Several reasons account for immigration. Most important was that there were more economic, employment and education opportunities in the capital than anywhere else in Ethiopia. Natural disasters, especially the periodic famine and droughts, influenced many to migrate to Addis Ababa.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁵ Shimelis, 385.

³⁷⁶ Garretson, “Addis Ababa...,” 84a.

³⁷⁷ Shimelis,(2011).

³⁷⁸ Garretson, “Addis Ababa...,” 84a

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 84b.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 84.

Generally, Addis Ababa's urbanism, in the post-colonial period, is one of mediation, and the tension this involves, between the local and the global, the traditional and the modern, the colonial and the non-colonial, and the Ethiopian and the rest of the world."³⁸¹ Its urbanization displays "elements of retention, modification, innovation, and transformation. There were forces and actors which were local-municipal, colonial, national, and cosmopolitan."³⁸² Finally, it would not seem an improbable conclusion that the whole historical context for the life and works of Yilma Déréssa was a context defined in change in all its aspects in political formation, in social milieu and environmental surroundings. Correspondingly, as an important Ethiopian statesman, he himself was an agent of that historical process.

In summary, this chapter has attempted to give a historical setting to the subject of study. Having emphasized the importance of context in historical study, the chapter argued that a biography of Yilma Déréssa can be understood well when it is situated within the general attributes of the Ethiopian state, major historical developments related to it, its institutions and practices. As a celebrated Minister of Finance for more than 16 years since 1941 and a statesman who contributed to the success of especially the country's foreign trade and foreign affairs, undoubtedly, the life and works of Yilma is better reconstructed, if the relevant attributes of the Ethiopian state are offered as a background. Particularly, brief discussion is made on the general feature of public finance in Ethiopia. The discussion of the incorporation of *Leqa Näqämté* into the centralized Ethiopian state is important to historicize Yilma Déréssa, his father *Bilatta Déréssa Amänté* and his grandfather *fitawrari Amänté Bäkäre* as members of aristocratic family of Wälläga. Issues related to the power struggle between the 'progressives' and 'traditionalists' in the first quarter of the 20th century are briefly surveyed to situate my subject of study in a

³⁸¹ Shimelis, 48.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, 54-55.

proper context. The political institutions and practices of the Ethiopian state is by far the most important circumstance for a political biography of Yīlma Déréssa and due consideration is given to the discussion on old and new institutions such as the office of the *Şāhafé Tizaz*, the Council of Ministers, the parliament and Crown Council as well as political practice such as *däğ ģinat*, *aqqabé sä'at*, other palace etiquette. As the socio-political formation of the Ethiopian absolutist state was not devoid of some internal contradictions, this chapter attempted to point out some overt tensions pertinent to a political biography of *Ato* Yīlma Déréssa. At last, the urbanization process of Addis Ababa is considered as an environmental setting for a biography of Yīlma Déréssa with its elements of retention, modification, innovation and transformation.³⁸³

³⁸³ *Ibid.*

Chapter Three

The Formative Years: 1907-1941

3.1. Family Background and Childhood (1907-1935)

Yilma Déréssa was born on September 24, 1907 in Çutta, not far from the town of Gimbi in Western Wälläga Zone of Oromiya Region.³⁸⁴ Çutta, a district known among the inhabitants of Ghimbi and its environs especially for its dense forest, is located some 7 to 10 kilo meters from Ghimbi to the south of the town on the way to Nolé Kaba.³⁸⁵ Compared to the town of Gimbi which is 1,930 meters above sea level, Çutta is an elevated plateau.³⁸⁶

Yilma's mother, Çaltu Sonto seems to have come from a ruling family in eastern Wälläga as her father, Sonto Dénta, was a certain *fitawrari*.³⁸⁷ Oral tradition claims that she belonged to the *Sasiga* clan. Déréssa Amänté, Yilma's father, obviously belonged to the ruling aristocratic family of *Léqa Näqämté*.³⁸⁸ As Bäkäre Godana (r. 1841-1868) was the acknowledged founder of *Léqa Näqämté*, members of his family and their descendants including Yilma Déréssa are known, both in the literature and among the people of the Wälläga Oromo, as the *wärrä Bäkäre* (lit. the Bäkäre family).³⁸⁹

³⁸⁴ Folder No. 63.1.49.21, File No. 461, NALA.

³⁸⁵ For an average adult man who has walking habit, it probably takes some 40 to 50 minutes to reach Çutta from Gimbi.

³⁸⁶ According to d'Abbadie, Gimbi was the name of a king. "It first came to European knowledge when it appears on the 1903 map by Hughes Leroux as Mount Ghimbi." Alain Gascon, "Gimbi" in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 2 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 799a.

³⁸⁷ Informants: Biqila Käbaa and Täsgära Tučo.

³⁸⁸ Evidently, *Léqa Näqämté*, an emerging Oromo kingdom in eastern Wälläga with which the life of Yilma Déréssa and his family is associated, came into existence primarily as a result of internal dynamics of change within the Mäčča society and became one of the Mäčča Oromo states since the end of the first half of the nineteenth century. See Tesema, *The Political Economy*...64; Hultin, 411; Informants: Biqila Käbaa, Täsgära Tučo, Nägassa Fäyisa, Čärnät Waqwaya, Mulugeta Etäffa (Dr), Bīrhanā Déréssa and Täšomā Gäbrä Mariam.

³⁸⁹ Aggressive competition to preserve and consolidate *qäbiyeet* ('land possession') rights among some *Léqa* clans and sub-clans since the dawn of the nineteenth century had created an opportune moment for a very sensitive and restless young man, Bäkäre Godana. "Adopted to Bārarti Amo, his paternal uncle and an *abbaa bokkuu* (a leader of the generation class in power among most Oromo groups), Bakare not only maintained his uncle's political and economic interests but also expanded it considerably waging war against other clans and peoples in the area. Though

At the time of Yılma's birth, Çutta was an outpost administrative center of *Léqa* Nāqāmté beyond the Dédessa River under the rule of his grandfather *fitawarari* Amānté Bākāré. Oral traditions in Çutta underline that it was Amānté Bākāré who established the township of Çutta itself probably in the last quarter of 19th century.³⁹⁰ As the Dédessa river was considered as the traditional boundary between the Leeqaa and the Sibü Oromo clans,³⁹¹ both parents of Yılma Déréssa, therefore, were new comers to the area from Nāqāmté as prominent members of the military-cum-administrative community after the sporadic clashes between the different clans of Māçça Oromo(the Leeqaa and the Sibü Oromo) beyond the Dédessa river.³⁹²

Tesema Ta'a noted that even before the advent of the *wärrä Bākāré* and their followers from Nāqāmté, the Léqa communities around Gimbi who had established their

he was once an *abba dulla*, he deliberately ignored the basic tenets of customary *gadaa* rules and regulations. Therefore, Bākāré, making his base of authority on his military prowess and efficient method of surplus appropriation, established his autocratic rule over the area between Wama and Dhidheessa rivers assuming the title of *mootii* (king) and exercising ultimate authority beyond the traditional eight year tenure. His son and successor, Moroda Bākāré, extended his family's influence and power still further, having crushed revolts which broke out in the subject territories at the death of his father, with the help of his brothers and some devoted vassals. By a blend of diplomacy and conquest, he gained supremacy over Gimbi, Haru, Arjo, Nejo, Jarso, Babo- Gämbäl, Jäbäl and Guyo Mandi, before the arrival of the Gojamites in that region." Tesema, *The Political Economy...* 64-66; Terrefe, 74; Marco Bassi, "Abbaa bokkuu," in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol 1 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003), 12b. Tsega Endalew, "Bakaree Godaana," *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, eds. Sighbert Uhlig and Alessandro Bausi, Vol 5 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014) 269a.

³⁹⁰ Informants: Biqila Käbba and Täkle Roro

³⁹¹ Alessandro Truilzi, "Nekemte and Addis...", 52.

³⁹² Sori Dämbi, the local leader of the Leeqaa community appealed to Moroda for military assistance and this created an opportune moment for Moroda, who had always nourished strong ambitions for incorporating the rich Sibü areas in the West. He quickly sent a contingent of horsemen led by his own brothers, Amānte and Dide Bākāré, which successfully repelled the enemies of Leeqaa Ghimbi and eventually brought them under control. Moroda appointed his brothers Amānte and Cibsä in Haru and Gimbi respectively, in order to cement his newly acquired suzerainty over them. This state of affairs brought about a general sense of political crisis in the whole of Sibü country. The threatening Leeqaa Nāqāmté aggression disturbed the communities between the Dhidheessa River and Ula Lemmana, the traditional boundary between the leqa and the Sibü. To crush the expanding forces of the Leqa, an inter-tribal alliance with a *Kakaa*(an oath) was formed among the Sibü of Najja, Bojji and Jarso. The allies agreed to follow the lead of Waco Dabalo of Jarso, a respected warrior with the strongest local army. They planned to march together and take Gimbi by surprise. However, Konno Faro, one of the leaders of Najjo Sibü, betrayed the scheme when he stealthily left for Nāqāmté, met Moroda, and disclosed the plans of the Sibü. Moroda was thus alerted and sent strong reinforcements to Gimbi. Nevertheless, the Sibü forces managed to challenge the Leeqaa army, raided Gimbi itself and even forced Cibsä to withdraw temporarily. More Leqaa reinforcements were sent and in the ensuing confrontations, Sibü resistance was broken. The state of Leeqaa Nāqāmté had thus gone a long way on the eve of the advent of the Gojjame and Šäwan forces in Wallaga, in establishing a vast patronage throughout the region between the Wama in the east and the Jawé river in the west. Tesema, *The Political Economy...*, 74-75; Informant: Biqila Käbba.

qäbiyyee ('possession') beyond the traditional boundary across the Dédessa, were a minority group in a predominantly Sibu country. The advent of Näqämtee military force in Gimbi and its environs was made easy by local conflict between the minority communities of the Léqa around Gimbi and the Haru as well as the Nolé in 1870s.³⁹³

Consequently, after the forces of Léqa Näqämté subdued the local resistance in the surrounding area of Gimbi in the early 1870s, Amänté Bäkäre, Yılma's grandfather and his followers first settled at a place called Qäki, on the peak of a mountain in the vicinity of Çutta.³⁹⁴ However, Qäki was somewhat environmentally unfriendly as the tip of the mountain was exposed to heavy wind. Hence, Amänté changed his quarters to the present site which is a relatively flat terrain surrounded by stream ravines. The move from Qäki to the plateau quarter of Çutta must have happened after Léqa Näqämté was incorporated into the expanding Šäwan state as traditions also mention the shift of the location of Çutta St. George Church that Amänté had built first at Qäki.³⁹⁵

After the incorporation of Léqa Näqämté into the imperial state in 1880s, local traditions recall that Yılma's grandfather *fitawrari* Amänté Bäkäre allied with the Šäwan forces in their military campaign against foreign incursion. When the *Mähadist* forces invaded Western Wälläga in mid 1880s, *Ras* Gobäna Daçi went to Western Wälläga in 1886 and defeated the *Mähadists* at the battle of Guté Dili, near the town of Nägo in 1886. Oral traditions reveal that *Ras* Gobäna,

³⁹³ Tesema, *The Political Economy...*, 64, 74; Alessandro Truilzi, "Nekemte and Addis Ababa...", 52.

³⁹⁴ Informants: Biqila Käbbaa and Täsgära Tučo.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.* Both informants mention a certain priest by the name of *Aba* Walda Elias whom my informant assume as the first priest who brought the *Tabot* (Ark of the Covenant) of St. George Church from "Goğam". During the field work, my attempt to get any data from the church people and documents became unsuccessful as the church was not giving a regular religious service at the period of my field research and no descendants of *Aba* Wäldä Elias was living in Çutta.

besides the Šāwan forces that he commanded, mobilized local forces from Wälläga.³⁹⁶ *Fitawrari* Amänté, in cooperation with *Ras* Gobäna, was one of the military leaders who fought against the Mähadists and Amänté was praised for his military prowess in the battle against the Ansars.³⁹⁷ This alliance between the Šāwan forces led by *Ras* Gobäna and the local aristocratic rulers can be explained best by Charles Tilly's assumption that "in the course of makingwar extracting resources, and building up the state apparatus, the managers of states formed alliances with specific social classes. The members of those class loaned resources, provided technical services, or helped ensure the compliance of the rest of the population, all in return for a measure of protection against their own rivals and enemies."³⁹⁸

Though known as one of the members of the *wärrä Bäkäre*, oral tradition reveals that the grandfather of Yīlma Déréssa, *fitawrari* Amänté Bäkäre wasn't the biological son of Bäkäre Godana.³⁹⁹ Key informants from Ghimbi noted that the biological father of Amänté was a certain Guré Miğu who was from Nāqämté. Among his brothers, *fitawrari* Borça Guré and Likasa Guré were known in the district and used to live in a well known village called Tinfäa near Nāqämté.⁴⁰⁰ However, being exceptionally tall, Amänté was physically fit especially for elephant hunting. He was also known for his bravery and military skills.⁴⁰¹ Naturally, to exploit the hot lowland ivory-rich region of Handäq, located between the Dédéssa and Angär rivers entailed the

³⁹⁶ Atieb Ahmed Daffalla, "Sheikh Khojele Al-Hassan and Bela-Shangul (1825-1938)" (BA thesis in History, Department of History, Haile Sellassie I University, 1973), 28-29; Terrefe, 9-12.

³⁹⁷ Yämanä Gäbrä İgziabhér, "Sēna Wärrä Bäkäre", Manuscript (1971 E.C.), 85-88, (Shared by my adviser Professor Tesema Ta'a, Department of History, Addis Ababa University).

³⁹⁸ Tilly, 183.

³⁹⁹ Informants: Biqila Kābba, Täsgāra Tučo, Mulugeta Etäffa and Täšomä Gäbrāmariam. Greenfield, 101. Adoption of able bodied and talented individuals into one's own family was common among the Oromo society and Bäkäre Godana himself was adopted to Bārarti Amo's family who was infact his paternal uncle's family. Tesema, *The Political Economy...*, 64.

⁴⁰⁰ Informants: Biqila Kābaa, Täsgāra Tučo and Nāgassa Fäyisa.

⁴⁰¹ Informants: Abāraš Déréssa and Bīrhanā Déréssa

expertise of individuals of Amänté's type.⁴⁰² Therefore, Bäkäre Godana adopted Amänté as his own son and after his death in 1868 the successor of Bäkäre, Moroda Bäkäre(r. 1868-1889) gave Amänté, together with his brother Çibsa Bäkäre, a military-cum-administrative responsibility in an attempt to expand the territory of *Leeqa* Näqämté beyond the Dédessa river.⁴⁰³ There Amänté, as it is noted in the above lines, established a semi-autonomous power-center around Çutta waging war against the local Oromo clans such as Bonda'o, Čawi, Tosio and the Nilo-Saharan speaking peoples (derogatory '*Šanqila*') living in the Dédessa Valley.⁴⁰⁴ *Fitawarari* Amänté Bäkäre had five sons and five daughters from different wives.⁴⁰⁵ His eldest child was Daqtu followed by Awaği Amänté. Both were females and, the third one, Déréssa, by Gälané Loko, seems to have been considered as the senior sibling in the family as in any other patriarchal society.⁴⁰⁶ Other children of Amänté were Dämbälé, Afomia (*alias*, Golgo), Tırunăș, Gäbrä Mariam, Gäbrä İgzi, Bälai and Mänkır Amänté. Some sons of Amänté, for example, Gäbrä Mariam and Bälai, were so young that they even attended school with Déréssa's son, Yılma at Çutta, Addis Ababa, Egypt and England.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰² Elephant hunting in Dédessa was one of the common socio-economic activities in the period under discussion. "In Ethiopia as elsewhere in East Africa, the early 19th century witnessed a great expansion of the ivory trade. As a result of improved fire-arms used in elephant hunting, ivory exports expanded steadily starting from the early 19th century. During the last period of Emperor Melilek II reign, ivory was an important source of government revenue. The custom by the mid-19th century was that a successful hunter yielded the sovereign one every two tusks, and this was soon understood in terms of the first tusk to touch the ground. Ase Mēnilék II, in return, gave the hunter an honorific ring to be placed in the ear as a mark of distinction. Tusks were by then transported along the principal trade routes, via Gondär, Alıyyu Amba, Harär (later Addis Abäba), to the ports of Massawa and Zäyila, and subsequently by rail to Djibouti. The near-extinction of Ethiopian elephants in the early 20th century, as well as restrictions on hunting, led to a dramatic decline in the ivory trade." Richard Pankhurst, "Hunting," in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 2 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 91b. "Ivory" in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 2 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 248a-b. Informants: Abäraš Déréssa and Bırhanä Déréssa.

⁴⁰³ Tesema, *The Political Economy*..., 74.

⁴⁰⁴ Informant: Biqila Kābbaa

⁴⁰⁵ Informants: Abäraš Déréssa and Bırhanä Déréssa.

⁴⁰⁶ NALA, Folder No. 63.1.49.21, File No. 461.

⁴⁰⁷ Informant: Bırhanä Déréssa

The very compound of *fitawrari* Amänté Bäkäre and later the home of Déréssa Amänté at Çutta,⁴⁰⁸ informants recall, was the administrative hub of the whole settlement in the area in the last quarter of the 19th century and the first two decades of the twentieth century. The town of Gimbi itself was most probably founded in the 1910s which was, in fact, after the establishment of Çutta.⁴⁰⁹ Indeed, as it is noted in the above lines, Çutta was not a no-man's-land when *fitawrari* Amänté made it his permanent seat. For instance, the locality was named after the very name of a native individual called Çutta whose mother, Bontu Gäčawo, was especially known for her spiritual power in the area. Before the advent of the *wärrä Bäkäre* and their followers beyond the Dédéssa River in the second half of 19th century, Çutta was known as her tenure by virtue of her religious authority. Tradition mentions especially the Bonda'o to which Bontu Gäčawo belonged as a native Oromo sub clan in Çutta and the surrounding area. Other clans in the area include the Dallo, the Tosio and the Ğawi. According to oral tradition, Bontu Gäčawo and her son Çutta used to sacrifice bulls at the peak of a mountain and perform traditional rituals there whenever the area suffered from shortage of rain or when the rainy season was late.⁴¹⁰

After Çutta became *fitawrari* Amänté's *qäbiyee* ('possession') at the last quarter of the 19th century, however, big houses surrounded by small ones were built for residential and administrative purposes.⁴¹¹ The subordinates of *fitawrari* Amänté as well as commoners used to attend judiciary hearings and participated in discussions on administrative issues. In order to feed

⁴⁰⁸ Informants: Biqila Käbaa and Abäraš Déréssa

⁴⁰⁹ Gimbi had served as a *gibbi* of the local Oromo Leeqaa administrators of Gäbrä Égziyabéher Moroda Alain Gascon, "Gimbi," 799a.

⁴¹⁰ Informant: Biqila Käbaa

⁴¹¹ Some twelve big and small houses in the main compound of *fitawrari* Amänté Bäkäre went into ruins ruined since Çutta was abandoned since 1921. Informant: Biqila Käbaa.

the residents of the court and visitors, banquets were organized most often on the daily basis.⁴¹² *Fitawrari* Amänté had hundreds of people both as household slaves and farmers. The majority of them were war captives and purchased ones.⁴¹³

As to the new socio-cultural development in Çutta, it can be concluded that the clergy of St. George Orthodox Church probably (led by *Abba* Wäldä-Elias) became instrumental in the gradual expansion of Amharic (in its spoken and written forms) and Orthodox Christainity in Çutta.⁴¹⁴ Among memorable events in Çutta since the turn of the twentieth century was the colorful annual festival of the holyday of the Holy Cross (*Mäsqäl*) celebrated at the end of September. The bunch of woods with desiccated leaves (*dämära*) used to be erected in front of Çutta St. George Church and elders set on fire with torch. For many inhabitants of Çutta, including minors like Yılma, the religious observance as well as the traditional songs, dances and games accompanied with feasting made memorable the celebrations to commemorate the ‘discovery’ of the Holy Cross (*Mäsqäl*) and the Ethiopian Epiphany (*Ṭimqät*). As oral traditions claim, *Fitawrari* Amänté had adopted the socio-cultural practices of the Šäwan and Goğam Amhara’s since the early period of his arrival at Çutta in 1880s.⁴¹⁵ In this respect, some of the names of Amänté’s children can be taken as linguistic evidence.

⁴¹² Even after the construction of modern roads in the province, the neighboring town Gimbi is where the road from Näqämté and Addis Abäba divide into two branches, the northern leading to Asosa and the southern to Gambella, Alain Gascon, “Gimbi”, 2005, 799a; Informants: Bikila Kabaa and Abäraš Déréssa

⁴¹³ Informant: Abäraš Déréssa.

⁴¹⁴ Informants: Biqila Kābbaa and Nägasa Fäysa

⁴¹⁵ Informants: Abäraš Déréssa and Biqila Kābba.



Figure 1. Çutta St. George Church (the person at the foreground is *Obbo* Biqila Kābba, my informant)

Because Çutta was located on the route to and from Illu Abba Bora via Nolé Kaba, visitors and passangers from near and remote places made a temporary stop at it. *Fitawrari* Amānté used to host higher and lower chiefs with their respective followers from Wälläga and elsewhere. Yılma's father, *Bilata* Déréssa Amānté is said to have shown great interest in having conversation with stragers at Çutta.⁴¹⁶ For ivory was in great demand at that time, *fitawrari* Amānté was not only engaged in elephant hunting but also hosted hunters from other places such as Šäwa, Goğam, Gondär and Harärgé. Besides provisions, *fitawrari* Amānté used to offer slaves

⁴¹⁶ Informants: Biqila Kābba and Bīrhanä Déréssa.

as gifts to his guests.⁴¹⁷ It seems probable that excessive hunting in Wälläga resulted in the decline of the number of elephants and this ecological development obliged the ruler of *Leeqaa* Nāqämté to write a letter of complaint to Emperor Mīnilik II as early as 1907.⁴¹⁸

When Déréssa married Çaltu in 1894, he was only 17 years old.⁴¹⁹ Yılma's mother, Çaltu Sonto, was small in stature with a slim figure and had prominent cheek bones. As can be observed from the portraits of Çaltu and my subject of the study, there is a remarkable resemblance between Çaltu Sonto's and Yılma Déréssa. Informants who know her recall unanimously that "Çaltu Sonto had a very strong personality and an independent mind. She most often wore a stern expression which showed her determined personality. She was uncompromising on matters that she thought were right and proper."⁴²⁰ Interestingly enough, her obstinate manner was consistent both in her private and public lives. Written and oral sources refer to her defiant comportment against whoever that would attempt to impose anything against her interest and agreement. This tendency includes, for example, failure to appear in court and challenging the judge and the prosecutor even against court procedures.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁷ Informant: Abäraş Déréssa.

⁴¹⁸ *Däğazmač* Gäbrä İgziabhér Moroda to Emperor Menilek II, Tahsas, 24 1900 E.C. in Alessandro Truilzi and Tesema Ta'a, 70,79,81.

⁴¹⁹ Informant: Abäraş Déréssa; *Bilatta* Déréssa Amänté Obituary, NALA, Folder No. No.63. 1.13.07.

⁴²⁰ Informants: Hannah Yılma, Sofia Yılma, Bırhanä Déréssa, Bulča Dämäqsa, Mulugeta Etäfa, Biqila Käbaa.

⁴²¹ Report on the Court decision of Wälläga Province High Court, Säné 15, 1940 E.C. Ref. No. 112/40, File No. 1613, File Name "Çaltu Sonto," Folder No.321, Government Property, Wäldä Mäsqäl Tariku Memorial Archive, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University; Informants: Bırhanä Déréssa and Mulugeta Etäfa.



Figure 2. *Adé* (Mrs.) Çaltu Sonto Denta⁴²²

In terms of physique, Yılma's father was very different from Çaltu's. Déréssa was tall like his father Amänté Bäkäre "(about 6 feet and 6 inches) and physically imposing with an elegant feature. He was good looking and never gained weight; being diabetic he was much

⁴²² Private collection of Yämanä İjĩgu Dämĩsẽ.

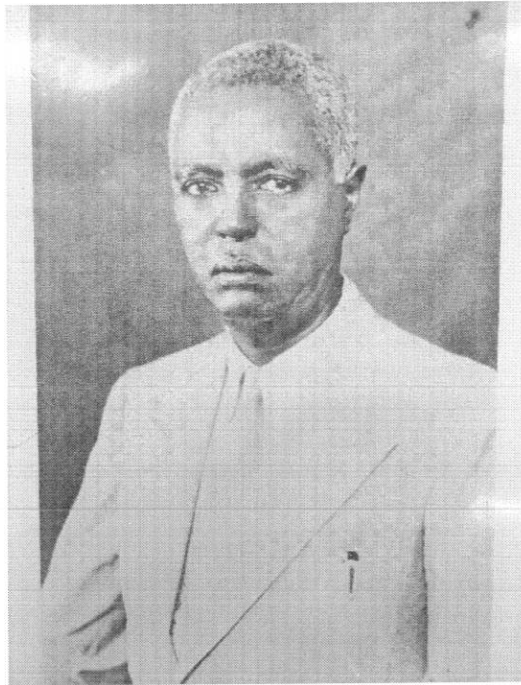


Figure 3. *Bilata Déréssa Amänté Bäkäré*⁴²³

disciplined and watched his diet. He was a man one could not help to notice when he entered a room.”⁴²⁴ Indeed, his tallness used to attract spectators around his neighborhood in Addis Ababa when he took an outing in late afternoon while accomplishing his usual daily walk.⁴²⁵

Born in August 1885 (Nähasé 16, 1877 E.C) in Gimbi, the son of Gälané Loko and Amänté Bäkäré, Déréssa had learnt Amharic in his childhood in Çutta.⁴²⁶ His father must have hired an Amharic teacher for Déréssa most probably from among the local clergy who gave religious service at Çutta St. Georgis Church.⁴²⁷ Informants at Çutta credited *Abba Wäldä-Elias* for

⁴²³ *Bilatta Déréssa Amänté* Obituary, NALA, Folder No.63. 1.13.07,

⁴²⁴ Informant: Hannah Yilma

⁴²⁵ Informant: Bīrhanā Déréssa

⁴²⁶ *Bilatta Déréssa Amänté* Obituary.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*; Informant: Biqila Kābaa

commencing traditional education in the area.⁴²⁸ According to his obituary, when Déréssa married Çaltu he was 17. Apart from his administrative tasks, he had begun a trading business in coffee and gold.⁴²⁹ With the title of *Qäñazmač* he began state service as administrator of Haru Wărăhano and Wără Gibé subdistricts (*wărădas*) in Wälläga at the age of 22/23 in 1906/07 and he was designated as *fitawrari* in 1910/11.

Oral sources emphasize how the death of his father at Handäq in Dédéssa wilderness while hunting elephants, had distressed Déréssa. During this tragic moment, Déréssa had accompanied his father.⁴³⁰ This was around 1913 and six months after the death of his father Déréssa divorced Yılma's mother Çaltu Sonto. My key informant noted that as the defiant manner of the wife reached a point beyond the tolerance of the husband, the couples were separated. By then, Çaltu and Déréssa begot two children, first Yäšimäbét and then Yılma. The latter was less than seven years old when his mother and father were separated.⁴³¹ Oral sources indicate that after the divorce, Çaltu lived for a short time in Çutta in a separate house. Eventually, she moved to Nāqämtee and began her lonely life there for almost the rest of her life.⁴³² Afterwards, Déréssa Amänté married his second wife, Ašädä Mariam, a daughter of *Fitawrari* Särba, from the bordering district of Nolé Kaba.⁴³³ This neighborhood, unlike Çutta, was administered by

⁴²⁸ Informant: Biqila Kābaa

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.* Informant: Abäraš Déréssa.

⁴³⁰ Oral traditions vary in the detail on the death of *Fitawrari* Amänté in Dédéssa valley. One tradition stated that Amänté was killed by an angry elephant as he attempted to kill it after the beast furiously threatened the whole contingent of hunters. Another tradition narrates that an elephant killed Amänté while he and others sat down in their tent. Informants: Abäraš Déréssa, Bikila Kābba, Täsgära Tučo.

⁴³¹ Informant: Hannah Yılma

⁴³² Informants: Biqila Kābaa, Bırhanä Déréssa; Report on the Court decision of Wälläga Province High Court.

⁴³³ When Déréssa proposed to marry Ašädämariam, she was already a fiancée of another person who had paid even the dowry as per the custom of the community. However, knowing the new suitor was a son *Fitawrari* Amänté, her parents broke their promise and gave back the dowry and arranged the marriage with Déréssa. Informant: Abäraš Déréssa.

Däğazmač Haile Täsfayé, a settler official(a *näftäña*) appointed from the Imperial Government.

After a year or two, Déréssa and Aşädä Mariam had a daughter by the name of Abäraş.⁴³⁴

Until Déréssa left Çutta for Addis Ababa for good probably in 1919 he was a pioneer for the expansion of modern education in the area.⁴³⁵ As early as the 1910s, Déréssa was instrumental in commencing modern education in Çutta. He is especially remembered for employing an English language teacher from Addis Ababa. In addition to establishing a sort of elementary school in Çutta, he established a handcraft workshop in his own compound in which workers produced metal works, costume jewelries, carpets and cotton sheet.⁴³⁶

Yılma's father was also known for his contributions to the Amharic weekly *Bırhanına Sălam* news paper. Though sources are silent when and where Déréssa learned how to read and write Amharic, it sounds plausible to assume that he would learn from the clergy of Çutta St. George Church. He wrote about 22 articles on various national issues in the years between 1925 and 1932. Among these pieces of writing, three of them appeared on the front page.⁴³⁷ His writings focused mostly on the introduction and expansion of modern education, the importance of planning and organization in government institutions, issues related to inflation, import and

⁴³⁴ Informant: Abäraş Déréssa.

⁴³⁵ Informants: Abäraş Déréssa, Biqila Kăbba and Täsgăra Tučo. The fact that Amănté Băkăré was buried in Năqămté but not in Çutta show how Çutta was not considered as home country among the family members.

⁴³⁶ Informant: Abäraş Déréssa; *Bilatta* Déréssa Amănté Obituary.

⁴³⁷ *Bırhanına Sălam*, "Kăkăntu Hasab Sălă Măţăbăq," 1st Year, No.6, 5-2-25; "Kă Itiyopiya wădă wîçi sălămiwăţa năgăr," 1st year, No. 13, 26-3-25; "Lă Ţiyaqé Măls," 1st Year No. 15, 9-4-25; "Agăraçîmîn băwnătăña fiqır inîwdădat," 1st Year, No. 21, 21-5-25; "Yăsîlţanê tîmîrt mălkam îndăhonă yămiyamălăkît mîsalé," 1st Year No. 30, 23-7-25; "sălă itiyopiya liğöç mahbăr lămikăfătăw yăsîlţanê tîmîrt bet mastawăşa," 1st Year, No.32, 6-8-25; "Yîdrăs kă'ato Găbră Kîrstos Tăklă Haymanot," 1st Year, No. 49, 3-12-25; "Yagăr wîşt Wăré," 2nd Year, No. 27, 8-7-26; "Mălkam akahéd," 2nd Year, No.50, 16-12-26; "sălă Itiyopiya năşanăt," 2nd Year, No. 51, 23-12-26; "sălă hagăr ŧîqîm," 3rd Year, No. 2, 13-1-27; "sîran sălă makănawăn," 3rd Year, No. 8, 24-2-27; "Yăzămănă Yohanîs Adisun inqûţataş lăbırhanîna sălām liğöç," 3rd Year, No.38, 22-9-27; "sălă kîbur ras nadăw," 3rd Year, No. 46, 17-11-27; "sălă tāmari bet măqom," 4th Year, No.12, 22-3-28; "sălă Addis Ababa çîgîr," 4th Year, No.14, 28-4-28; "Itiyopiya wădăfît mîn bitadărg yîşalatal," 4th Year, No. 18, 3-5-28; "îwntăñawîn Yagăr fiqır lămăsrat yămiyasasîb," 4th Year, No. 45, 8-11-28; "sălă şîlţanê tîmîrt năgăr," 5th Year, No. 20, 16-5-29; "sălă Itiyopiya săbîl," 6th Year, No. 1, 24-12-29; "sălă agăr akahed maşaşal," 7th Year, No. 17-12-31 and "sălă gizew yăgănzăb çîgîr," 8th Year No. 7 11-2-32.

export trade. Besides his prose articles that appeared in the *Birhanina Sälam* news paper, Déréssa also wrote a short story in June 1919.⁴³⁸

Interestingly, “Déréssa combined intellectual pursuits with exceptional entrepreneurial drive. His business interests included a mining concession that he acquired and exploited in southwestern Wälläga jointly with *Hakim Wärqinäh*, a soap factory, and a truck transport business in Addis Ababa.”⁴³⁹ Déréssa’s progressive views on the political economy of the country were not only resounding generalities and conventional rhetoric. He proved that he was a man of his words as he manumitted hundreds of slaves whom he had gotten as inheritance from his father in Çutta as early as 1921.⁴⁴⁰ Furthermore, he made financial contribution for the establishment of modern schools in Addis Ababa, Wälläga and Illu Abba Bora.⁴⁴¹ Having learnt the knowledge from a certain Sudanese by the name of *Hağgi* Ali, Déréssa was also widely recognized for his knowledge and skills in traditional medicine especially in the treatment of tuberculosis.⁴⁴²

In 1930, *Fitawrari* Déréssa was appointed as Director-General in the Ministry of Agriculture and a couple of years later he became the administrator of the property of Etege Mänän(*müsläné*, trans, ‘in lieu of me’) in Gomma until the invasion of Ethiopia by Fascist Italy.⁴⁴³ He spent more than five years in exile in the Sudan. Back home in 1942, he served the government in various capacities for about three decades. Among his government responsibilities, his services at the

⁴³⁸Didactic in its nature, this fictional work deals with the story of a person and his friend who accumulated too much money. Central to the story is how excess love for money is damaging. *Fitawrari* Déréssa, “Yä’ato Minim Laybäqanina Yä’ato Bäkäntu Tarik: Läsäw Ma’träğina Nuro Yä’mibäqawin Yä mi’yamäläkīt,” Manuscript IES. MS 1003.

⁴³⁹Bahru, *Pioneers of Change...*, 74-75.

⁴⁴⁰ Informants: Abäraš Déréssa, Biqila Käbaa, Täsgära Tučo, Sofia Yilma; Bilatta Déréssa Amänté Obituary, NALA. Folder No. No.63. 1.13.07.

⁴⁴¹In addition to introducing an elementary school at Çutta, Déréssa contributed 200 *birr* annually to Täfäri Mäkönnin School and 40 *birr* for a school at Mätu established by *Ras* Nadäw. See *Birhanina Sälam*, 1st Year, No. 21, 21-5-25 and 3rd Year, No. 46, 17-11-27.

⁴⁴² Informants: Amha Tässäma and Abäraš Déréssa.

⁴⁴³ *Bilatta* Déréssa Amänté Obituary.

Lower House of Parliament, in the Senate, in the Prime Minister's Office and in the Revenue Department are worth mentioning. After 1941, *Bilatta Déréssa* "developed a reputation as an Oromo oral historian."⁴⁴⁴ In casual discussions with family members too, especially with Yilma Déréssa, his father *Bilatta Déréssa* displayed a keen interest and particular inclination for history.⁴⁴⁵

3.2. Modern Education: From Çutta to London

Yilma, as a son of a governor of the district, was privileged both materially and socially in his childhood. He attended modern education in Çutta, together with his relatives, including his uncles such as Gäbrä Mariam Amänté and Bälay Amänté, from 1915 to 1919.⁴⁴⁶ The other pupils were Dästa Roro, Täkle Roro, Abdissa Birbirso and Amänu Bangé. A house that served as a classroom in a 'school' was built in the compound of *Bilatta Déréssa*. The pupils attended first Amharic language lessons given by *Ato Mogasa* who had a relatively good command of Amharic in addition to *Afan Oromo*. A student recalled that the language teacher utilized an Oromo-Amharic dictionary prepared by *Bilatta Déréssa Amänté* as a teaching material. Yilma and his classmates were eager to develop their Amharic language skills to the extent that they decided not to use any other language as a medium of communication in the classroom except Amharic.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁴ Bahru, *Pioneers of Change...*, 75.

⁴⁴⁵ Informants: Sofía Yilma and Bīrhanā Déréssa.

⁴⁴⁶ In his reply to the letter by S.A. Kaye, the editor of the Institute for Research in Biography that requested him to fill out a questionnaire that would enable the compilers of the "Who's Important in the Government in 1945", Yilma prepared a two page biographical sketch. Yilma Déréssa to S.A. Kaye, 3rd September, 1945, Personal File of Yilma Déréssa, HO, MOFED.

⁴⁴⁷ *Bilatta Déréssa* prepared the material while he was in Addis Ababa for medical treatment at the Medical Center of Hakim Wārqnāh. The friendship between the two seems to have begun when *Bilatta* was given a surgical treatment which obliged him to stay long in Addis Ababa. Informant: Tāklé Roro Bākäré.

Fitawrari Déréssa, after visiting Mīnilik II School in Addis Ababa, planned to expand the education that was provided for Yīlma and his colleagues at Çutta and hired *Ato* Zäwdé Taddässä (later *Qāñazmač*), a graduate of Minilik II School. Therefore, the six students at Çutta got an opportunity to catch up on other students at the capital.⁴⁴⁸ Until Yīlma became 13 or 14, a key informant recalled, he pursued his early education in Çutta especially with the assistance of *Ato* Zäwdé, the English language teacher employed by *Bilatta* Déréssa Amänté. Consequently, Yīlma and others completed grade 5 in Çutta. Apart from their classroom lessons at school, they used to make educational visits to the handcraft workshop within the compound of his father.⁴⁴⁹

Despite his minority, Yīlma had his own personal thatch roofed house in Çutta laminated with newspapers. In order to emphasize the boundary of the ‘private house’, the compound was fenced off and within it, coffee and banana plants were cultivated. In this ‘private house’, Yīlma had his own chickens looked after by his younger half-sister, Abäraš. Besides, as pet animals, Yīlma had a monkey and a baby antelope.⁴⁵⁰ Though Yīlma’s ‘private house’ was a full-fledged one, he spent the night with his age-mate uncles in a room within the main residence of his father. Among Yīlma’s childhood interests, an attempt to invent a telephone using gourds connected with a string at two ends, one at his ‘private house’ and the other at the school, was recalled by his sister. Yīlma and his colleagues were assisted by a book to carry out this

⁴⁴⁸ Informant: Täklé Roro Bäkäre

⁴⁴⁹ Informant: Abäraš Déréssa.

⁴⁵⁰ One day, Yīlma (probably he was 10) gave his monkey a bottle of mead (*ṭāḡ*) and it got drunk. Being drunk, the monkey attacked his four year old sister Abäraš and *Wäyzäro* Ašādāmariam his step-mother got angry with him. As the whole cattle of Çutta (including his parent’s) were taken to Nolé Kaba for mineral water (*horaa*) Yīlma’s baby antelope had died of hunger and this made Yīlma angry at his step mother.. Informant: Abäraš Déréssa.

experiment. Furthermore, most probably because of the practical training in handicraft, Yılma attempted to manufacture a carpet (*sığağa*) at his 'private house'.⁴⁵¹

When *Fitawrari* Déréssa left Çutta for Addis Ababa in early 1920s probably after his relations with rulers at Nāqāmté had been deteriorating as well as his trading business was in decline as a result of coffee disease, Yılma was among the band that travelled across the hazardous Dédéssa wilderness known for its deadly malaria and hostile climate.⁴⁵² Before the introduction of motor vehicles for surface transport, it took some two to three days to travel on foot and on horseback from Gimbi to Nāqāmté and another five days to Addis Ababa.⁴⁵³

Déréssa made his residence in Addis Ababa near St. George Church and he opened small-scale edible oil and soup producing mills in a rented house and in his own private house at Arada and Arat kilo where the present Ministry of Education and the Tourist Hotel are located.⁴⁵⁴ Déréssa is said to have sold his residential area some time in post-liberation period. In the meantime, Yılma and his uncles resumed their modern education at Mīnilik II School from 1919-1923⁴⁵⁵ During that time, the number of students in Yılma's class was not more than 20. The teachers were Coptic Egyptians, headed by one of their members, Hanna Saleeb Bey best known among Ethiopians as *Musé* Hanna. Because Yılma had completed his elementary education up to grade 5 at Çutta, he was registered for grade 6 most probably in English class. At that time, the English teacher was *Musé* Bādawi. Among Yılma's class and schoolmates, sources mention

⁴⁵¹ However, in one of Yılma's childhood years, a new dress to be sewed for him for Dāmāra holyday wasn't ready as the tailor at *Fitawrari*'s service was busy sewing for other members of the family. When his father and uncles dressed in their new suit to go to the church, the irritated Yılma stole his father's pistol and threatened to shoot anyone who would go to the church dressed in new dress. But, his step mother and a house slave disarmed him with appeasement. According to a key informant, *Fitawrari* Déréssa, as a chief administrator of Çutta, was too busy to keep his eyes always on Yılma. *Ibid.*, informants: Biqila Kābba; Abāraş Déréssa.

⁴⁵² Informant: Abāraş Déréssa.

⁴⁵³ Informants: Nāgasa Fāyīsa and Tāsgāra Tuco.

⁴⁵⁴ Informant: Abāraş Déréssa.

⁴⁵⁵ Yılma Déréssa to S.A. Kaye, 3rd September, 1945, Personal File of Yılma Déréssa, HO, MOFED.

Abäbä Bānti, Kasayé Täçané, Haile Giorgis Zäšānkora, Tämsas, Gäbrä Mādihīn Awäqä, Şigé Marqos, Ayana Bīru, Yohanīs Boru, Bälay and Gäbrä Egzi Amānté.⁴⁵⁶ In the school curriculum, sources indicate, much more emphasis was given for European languages and Amharic. “Courses were offered in geography, history, mathematics, and science. Attention was also paid to music, drawing, and acting-at that time the school had one of the capital’s few theatres. Physical education and sports also had their place in the schedule.”⁴⁵⁷

Written sources about Yīlma’s school days in high school and in university respectively at Alexandria Victoria College and London University are almost non-existent in Ethiopia.⁴⁵⁸ My written and oral sources are quite scanty. Yīlma wrote in his notebook:

According to the European Calendar I left Addis Ababa in 1923 to Alexandria Egypt for high school education. In those days Addis had only three or four elementary schools teaching modern subjects. These were: Menelik II school where I was learning, the Alliance François, the Swedish mission at Gulele near the present Ras Desta Hospital. In July before the Crown Prince, Ras Teferi Mekonen left for Europe picked students from the first two schools were presented to H.I.H and after reviewing them he commissioned Blaten Gueta Wolda Mariam to arrange for sending the students to schools abroad. I was one of these students. Climatic conditions were taken into account and Egypt and in particular Alexandria was chosen. Those [of us who] studied English went to Victoria College, a British school modeled after their public school in the home country. Those who [sic] studied

⁴⁵⁶ Among these students, Gäbrä Mādihīn Awäqä and Bälay Amānté were awarded sweater for best academic performance. Märsī’ē Hazān Wäldä Qirqos, *Tizitayē Silä Rasé...*, 145; Informant: Abäraş Déréssa. As a kind of compromise between tradition and innovation, instruction was safely left to Coptic teachers who could be relied upon to impart to their pupils a tempered version of modern education. Bahru, *Pioneers of Change...* 23.

⁴⁵⁷ Richard Pankhurst, “Ménilek II Secondary School” in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol 3, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 928b.

⁴⁵⁸ A written document which was produced most likely in the years between 1958 and 1960 without official seal nor signature in Yīlma’s personal file at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs mentions that Yīlma had attended Menilek II School, Addis Ababa; Victoria College, Alexandria, Egypt; and London School of Economics (University of London) Degree B.Sc.(Econ) London, 1933 consecutively. MOFA, File No. 1/1-Y, Personal File, File Name “Yīlma Déréssa”.

*French were sent to the Mission League school called Lycé
François.*⁴⁵⁹

Two key informants, besides, witnessed Yilma's stay at Victoria College. Mīnasé Lāmma, a lasting colleague of Yilma recalled their first encounter in Egypt when he used to study at Cairo and Yilma at Alexandria.⁴⁶⁰ Habtä Sīllassé Tafāsā, Ethiopian alumnus of Victoria College, also remembers that he read an engraved script 'Yilma' on a wooden table in a classroom during his school days.⁴⁶¹

It was only influential and wealthy families in the whole Middle East who could send their children to it and the school enrolled students from diverse countries.⁴⁶² "With the passage of time and as Victoria's reputation spread further afield this racial mix was enlarged to absorb new blood from all points of the compass. Syrians, well-born families from the Gulf and the Fertile Crescent competed with Libyans, Somalis, Yemenites, and Ethiopians for admission."⁴⁶³ Especially, in the first two decades of the twentieth century "it was to be common practice for Ethiopian students to enroll either in Victoria College or in the French *lycée* at Alexandria, in Egypt."⁴⁶⁴

The Ethiopian alumnus especially remembers the school administrators' rigid policy of language usage among students, obviously, in favor of English. This was not only in the classrooms but also in informal communication within the school compound. Arabic was strictly forbidden and

⁴⁵⁹ I am allowed to get access only to the excerpts of the notebook and other personal writings of Yilma which are in his grandson's (Yāmanā Ījīgu Dāmīśé) possession.

⁴⁶⁰ During vacation time Yilma used to travel to Cairo and his colleague Mīnasé in his turn also visited Alexandria. Informant: Mīnasé Lāmma

⁴⁶¹ This was indeed some one or two decades later after Yilma left the high school for London School of Economics. Informant: Habtä Sīllassé Tafāsā

⁴⁶² Informant: Habtä Sīllassé Tafāsā. From the moment of its foundation in October 1902 and throughout its heyday in the first half of the twentieth century, Victoria College acquired a legendary status as a unique example of Britain's supremacy not only in Egypt, but in the region as a whole. Alain Silvera, "Village College, Alexandria," in *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (January 2004): 166.

⁴⁶³ Silvera, 169.

⁴⁶⁴ Ras Tāfāri visited the Victoria College during the 1924 tour. See Bahru, *Pioneers of Change*...p.81.

students were penalized for making use of it. As mentioned in the above lines, students of the school belonged to diverse nationalities, the majority coming from the Middle East Arabic speaking Muslim countries.⁴⁶⁵ While Yilma was in Alexandria, his father *Bilatta* Déréssa Amänté visited Egypt in August 1925.⁴⁶⁶ Since his son Yilma and his younger brother Bäläy Amänté were in Alexandria pursuing their modern education, he would have visited them either in Cairo or Alexandria. While visiting Alexandria, it is unlikely that he didn't see them. Though it is difficult to find out the exact time when Yilma wrote a letter to his father from Alexandria, he is said to have raised the idea of sending his younger sister, Abäraš, to Victoria College. However, Déréssa hesitated to do so.⁴⁶⁷

For about three or four years, Yilma was in Alexandria until he left Egypt for Ethiopia to visit his family briefly in Addis Ababa. His father sent him money to cover his travel expenses from Egypt to Ethiopia. After three months stay at home, he went to England and joined London University in 1929. Thus, Yilma lived in England as a student in the late twenties and early thirties.⁴⁶⁸ Yilma narrated:

In those days life in England was pleasant specially the social side of it. Student could meet the world's greatmen in their prime, people like Ghandi, Nakhroma and Kiniates were floating in London and students from developing countries could attend their lectures and talk to them after lectures.

There was racial discrimination in England against Asians and Africans although the intensity of it never reached the level of the United and South Africa. For students the one big problem was to find housing otherwise restaurants and entertainment places were open to them. My friends from Ethiopia and myself were quite happy in England. We made few good friends and got on well generally. Although we were enjoying ourselves in England, that

⁴⁶⁵ Informant: Habtä Sillassé Tafäsä

⁴⁶⁶ *Bīrahniina Sīlam*, "Yīdrās kā'ato Gäbrä Kīrstos Täklä Haymanot," 1st Year, No. 49, 3-12-25.

⁴⁶⁷ Informant: Abäraš Déréssa

⁴⁶⁸ Note Book of Yilma Déréssa; Informant: Mīnasé Lämman

*did not hinder our eagerness to go back home. In 1933 Tsige Marcos he later on married my sister and I sailed via Marseille to Jebuti and from [there] to Addis Ababa by rail. Thereafter one by one they all headed for home.*⁴⁶⁹

Despite my considerable effort, I found no direct written evidence from government archives and private collections in Ethiopia that would elucidate Yılma's stay at London School of Economics and his completion of the Bachelor of Science Degree in Economics in 1933.⁴⁷⁰ Yet, almost all my informants, similar to some published works, unanimously describe Yılma as a graduate of the celebrated London School of Economics. In the list of alumni of the school graduated with honor, Yılma's name is said to be included and displayed on a wall of the school.⁴⁷¹

Among many references to Yılma's higher education in England, however, two circumstantial clues deserve brief discussion. In Haddis Alāmayāhu's memoir which mostly deals with his personal experience of the Italian period, the author states that Major Georgio Pallavicino, an Italian military officer at the Political Office in the newly formed fascist administration in Addis Ababa, told Hadis and Yılma that he knew that Yılma was a graduate of London School of Economics. Given Yılma's early responsibility at the Department of the League of Nations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Major Pallavicino's knowledge about Yılma's educational background would not be an astounding issue.⁴⁷² The other hint comes from Ato Nīgusé Habtä Wäld, Vice Minister of Information during the last years of Imperial era. Nīgusé recalled that an Israeli expert on propaganda who also used to teach in London University identified Yılma when the Israeli was talking to the Emperor for about 15 minutes in the palace in 1968. Nīgusé

⁴⁶⁹ Notebook of Yılma Déréssa in Yāmanā Igīgū's Possession.

⁴⁷⁰ My attempt to uncover school records from his personal files at the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and family collections became fruitless. This might be because of the devastating invasion of Fascist Italy. With the assistance of Yāmanā Igīgū Dāmisse, his grandson, in fact, I could find an electronic copy of a photograph of Yılma with a graduation gown sitting in a room probably his dormitory. But this cannot be taken as a substantial evidence for his completion of his study.

⁴⁷¹ Informant: Igīgū Dāmīśé.

⁴⁷² Haddis. 202.

remembers that Yīlma was about to enter into the Emperor's office as the Israeli was leaving. According to Nīgusé, the Israeli told him that Yīlma was once a champion of rugbi in the Campus.⁴⁷³

Back home in 1933 after some seven or eight years' stay abroad (save a three month short visit in 1929), Yīlma began his long state service at the Department of the League of Nations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁴⁷⁴ It was, since then, that Yīlma was called with a traditional title "*Līg*"(trans., 'son'). Though it is difficult to find any source that would explain why and how Yīlma was given that title, Mahtāmā-Sīlassé noted that "*Līg*" was a civilian title like '*Ato*' ('Mister') and was designated without portfolio.⁴⁷⁵ Ladislav Farago, a Hungarian journalist reporting for Associated Press in the 1930s, described Yīlma as Legation secretary at the Foreign Ministry. For a European journalist like Farago, Yīlma "was a 'cultivated' young man, who spoke English and French and was dressed in European clothes."⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷³ Informant: Nīgusé Habtā Wāld.

⁴⁷⁴ Ladislav Farago, 1935, 38; Personal File of Yīlma Déréssa, MOFA, File No. 1/1-Y, File Name "Yīlma Déréssa"

⁴⁷⁵ Mahtāmā Sīlassé, *Zikrā Nāgār*, 645.

⁴⁷⁶ Farago, 37.



Figure 4. Yilma Déréssa in London (1933)⁴⁷⁷

Yilma shared his views with Farago on the conditions of educated young Ethiopians like him in respect of the country's situation in the 1930s and Farago quoted Yilma saying:

We young Abyssinians are in duty bound to our country we are the bridge that the Emperor has thrown across European culture. It goes almost without saying that we are sent to finish our education in Europe or North Africa. Abyssinian students are to be found in all the important universities of the world. The Foreign Minister's sons studied at Oxford and Cambridge. We have to pay our studies out of our own pocket for the state for nothing. The Emperor, however, has a number of clever young Abyssinians educated in

⁴⁷⁷ In the Possession of Yāmanā Ijǧu.

*Europe at his own cost. This growing generation will complete the civilization of our country.*⁴⁷⁸

It may more probably be said that this stance led many to consider Yilma and his contemporaries as members of ‘Young Ethiopians’, better known in its French term, ‘*Jeunesse d’Ethiopie*.’⁴⁷⁹

Indeed, ‘Young Ethiopians’ is a collective term given mainly by Europeans and other foreigners in the early 20th century to Ethiopians (including some Eritreans resident in Ethiopia) who had attended modern schools in Ethiopia or abroad.⁴⁸⁰

In the years between 1933 and 1935, as a staff of the Department of League of Nations, Yilma’s day to day activities and responsibilities would have to do mostly with Ethiopia’s intricate engagement with the League of Nations.⁴⁸¹ Yet, from the case of a European journalist for an Associated Press in which Yilma was involved, handling issues related to visiting expatriates seems to be one of his activities. He worked in the Ministry with Sirak Hiruy and his father *Bilattén Géta* Hiruy Wäldä Sillassé.⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁸ Farago, 38.

⁴⁷⁹ Greenfield, 315.

⁴⁸⁰ Pankhurst noted that “members of this loose group of young educated Ethiopians were largely French-speakers and they were mainly employed in government bureaucracy, private business, the railway, and as interpreters. Regarded as “intellectuals” they were likened in foreign circles to the Young Egyptians and Young Turks. They were widely conceived as intensely patriotic, “anti-foreign”, and opposed to any accommodation with the neighboring colonial powers, as well as advocates of rapid modernization.” See Richard Pankhurst “Young Ethiopians,” in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Alessandro Bausi and Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 5 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014), 98a.

⁴⁸¹ “Ethiopia’s membership to the League of Nations and the country’s bid in the League had faced challenges from both domestic and foreign powers. Within the Ethiopian government, during the period of Haile Sellassie’s regency, both Empress Zawditu and *Fitawrari* Habtä Giorgis were opposed to foreign alliances and to negotiations in Europe. They believed instead in building a fortress around Ethiopia and in a diplomacy carried out in Addis Abeba under their watchful eyes. They were in total conflict with Tafari’s conclusion that national survival depended on policies that extricated Ethiopia from the pull of the tripartite powers and opened it to the other nations of the globe.” Harold Marcus, *Haile Sellassie I The Formative Years, 1892-1936* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 44. “Externally, European powers especially Great Britain resisted Ethiopia’s membership for slavery and slave trade were widespread in the country. However, on 28 September 1923, Ethiopia was admitted to the League of Nations by unanimous vote on the condition that Ethiopia strictly applied existing conventions prohibiting slavery.” Theodore M. Vestal, *The Lion of Judah in the New World: Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia and the Shaping of Americans’ Attitudes toward Africa* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011), 22.

⁴⁸² Hiruy was Minister of Foreign Affairs since April 1931 and his son Sirak was General Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Bahru, *Pioneers of Change...*, 72, 87.

It was during this time that *Bilatta* Déréssa and his companions were engaged, in accordance with the tradition of the day, in a family-arranged marriage between Yılma and Qıdışt, a daughter of *Fitawrari* Täsäma Bänti, a district ruler in Goro Gutu, Harärgé. Instrumental to the marriage proposal was *Fitawrari* Tafäsä, a cloth friend of *Blatta* Déréssa Amänté in Addis Ababa and a maternal uncle of the bride.⁴⁸³ Interestingly enough, the go-between was Yılma's boss at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Bilattén Géta* Hiruy Wäldä Sillassé. The bride was once a student at *Etégé* Mänän girls' school at Addis Ababa before the whole family moved to Goro Gutu in Harärgé.⁴⁸⁴ Though Yılma and Qıdışt had a daughter by the name of Şädalä Mariam from their family-arranged matrimony, their marriage did not last long. The imminent fascist invasion did affect the lives of Yılma and Qıdışt as it disturbed the lives of millions in the Horn of Africa.⁴⁸⁵

3.3. Yılma in the Black Lion Organization, the Western [Oromo] Confederation, His Subsequent Exile and Return (1936-1941)

When Fascist Italy invaded Ethiopia in October 1935, Yılma did not go to the war front but stayed in Addis Ababa.⁴⁸⁶ As Ethiopia's defeat became clear in April 1936, however, Yılma left the capital for Wälläga and involved actively in two major military and political movements in south western Ethiopia until Italian forces captured him and many others together with *Ras* İmiru Hailä Sillassé.⁴⁸⁷ In this regard, it seems quite 'paradoxical' to find Yılma Déréssa, as a leading

⁴⁸³ The companionship between *Bilatta* and *Fitawrari* Tafäsä begun since the time when the latter visited the former seeking traditional medical treatment for a family member suffering from tuberculosis. Informant: Amİha Täsäma.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁵ *Bilatta* Déréssa Amänté Obituary.

⁴⁸⁶ Informant: Mİnasé Lämma

⁴⁸⁷ Atieb Ahmed Dafalla, "Sheikh Khojele Al-Hassan and Bela-Shangul(1825-1938)" (BA thesis in History, Haile Sellasse I University, 1973), 65-67; Tadäsä Mēča, *Ṭiqur Anbäsa Bä Mi'irab İtiopia*, 2nd ed.(Addis

member of the Black Lion Organization and, simultaneously, a principal delegate of Wälläga Oromo chiefs who attempted to form the ‘Western Galla [Oromo] Confederation’ under the Mandate of the League of Nations/Great Britain. The existing literature on both developments seems to have overlooked the shifting roles of Yīlma Dérēssa most likely assuming this kind of changing camps of individuals as a common behavior in such chaotic period like the Italian invasion.⁴⁸⁸ However, in this section, I attempt to scrutinize both the primary and secondary sources in the hope of re-appraising Yīlma’s activities, if not positions, in the two significant developments.

Yīlma entered Nāqāmté in May 1936 together with a resistance group which consisted of hundreds of Ethiopian soldiers and civilians.⁴⁸⁹ At the time, *Ras* Īmiru Hailā Sīllassé, the future head of the armed forces and foreign affairs in the Provisional Government at Gore, was travelling southward through Goḡam after his final defeat in Tīgray and, out of confusion, crossed the River Abay at Gīndā Bārāt and camped in West Šāwa on his way to Goré.⁴⁹⁰

The group to which Yīlma belonged comprised young ex-cadets of the Holāta Military Academy and graduates of the Tāfāri Mākonīn Secondary School in Addis Abāba as well as about 50 defectors from Eritrea.⁴⁹¹ Hosted by *Dāḡazmač* Habtā Mariam Kumsa, the hereditary ruler of Nāqāmté, the resistance group later on established the *Ṭīqur Anbāsa* (‘Black Lion’)

Ababa, 2004 E.C.), 11.; Ezkiel, 75-96; Richard Pankhurst, “Ṭīqur Anbāsa,” *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig Vol. 4, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 920-921.

⁴⁸⁸ Patrick Gilks, *The Dying Lion Feudalism and Modernization in Ethiopia*, London: Julian Friedmann Publishers LTD., 1975, pp. 210-213; Amsalu Temesgen, “Italian Occupation and Response in and Around Naqamte, 1936-1941” BA Thesis in History, Addis Ababa University, 1983. Tesema Ta’a, “The Bonnaya Incident and the Italian Occupation of Naqamtee, 1936-1941,” *Proceedings of the 13th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, ed. Katsuyoshi Fukui, Eisei Kurimoto and Masayoshi Shigeta, Vol. 1 (1997): 263-285; Ezkiel Gebissa, 2002; Richard Pankhurst, “Ṭīqur Anbāsa”: Paulos, 46-48; Tadasä, 2004 E.C.

⁴⁸⁹ Tadasä, 4-5.

⁴⁹⁰ Īmiru Hailā Sīllassé, *Kayāhut Kāmastawisāw*, 2nd ed. (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, 2002 E.C.), 280.

⁴⁹¹ Richard Pankhurst, “Ṭīqur Anbāsa,” 920b.

Organization on Säné 29, 1928(6th July, 1936). However, Dawit Gäbru gives us a different fact about the place, date and leadership of the establishment of the Organization. He wrote that the Organization was formed in Ambo most probably in May 1936 and the first president was Ato Yilma Déréssa. Later on he was replaced by Doctor Alämä-Wärq for unknown reason.⁴⁹² Still another source revealed that the Black Lion Organization was formed in Näqämté.⁴⁹³ The organization had a ten-point constitution, “the most interesting aspect of which was its assertion of the supremacy of the political over the military command. On the issue of final political authority, it remained conservative, expressing its loyalty to Hayla-Sellase and his family.”⁴⁹⁴ Yilma was one of the top leaders among the 25 members of the executive body.⁴⁹⁵

Däğazmač Habtä Mariam allowed the members of the resistance group to camp in the compound of a public school in Näqämté. Soon after, with the consultation of the members of the resistance group, the *Däğazmač* became a volunteer to cover the monthly stipend.⁴⁹⁶ The presence of the resistance group armed with 21 machine guns, more than 350 rifles and 300 pistols contributed a lot re-establish peace and security in the town in the time of crises following the major defeat of Ethiopian forces in April 1936. Indeed, the modern army under the leadership of Colonel Bälay Hailä-Ab indicated a major departure in terms of training, organization and discipline from the traditional troops.⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹² One might suppose that Yilma was removed from his position because of his involvement in the ‘Western [Oromo] Confederation’. See Dawit Gäbru, *Käntiba Gäbru Yä’Itiyoپیya Qirs*, (Addis Ababa: Bole Printing House, 1985 E.C.), 236-238.

⁴⁹³ Sändu Gäbru, “Yä’Tiqur Anbäsa Tigil Bä’mirab Itiyoپیya”, IES,MS, 1688.

⁴⁹⁴ Bahru, *A History of...*, 174-175.

⁴⁹⁵ Tadäsä, 11.

⁴⁹⁶ For instance, he paid for a soldier 3 birr, for a sergeant 5, for a lieutenant 7, for Captain 12 and for a major 13 birr. For a Colonel and a higher official, the salary was 15 birr. Tadäsä, 7-8

⁴⁹⁷ Tadäsä, 17, 25.

While Yīlma was a leading member of the resistance movement, he left Nāqāmté for Gambella together with other members of the resistance group. Tadāsā wrote:

በምዕራብ ወሰናችን በኩል ከግርማዊ ንጉሠ ነገሥት ለሚመጣልን ትእዛዝና ምናልባትም አንዳንድ የዓለም ወሬ የሚደርሰን ቢሆን ከእንግሊዝ መንግስት ጋር ያለው መገናኛ እንዳይቋረጥብን በማለት እስከ ጋምቤላ ድረስ መልክተኛ መላክና የሆነውንና የሚሆነውን ነገር ማወቅ ስላስፈለገን፤ እንዲሁም የእንግሊዝ መንግስት እርዳታ ሊያደርግልን ቢወድ በመሳሪያ ረገድ እንዲደግፈን ለመጠየቅ መልእክተኞቹን ወደ ጠረፍ ላከ።

ለዚሁ ጉዳይ አፈጻጸም ወደ ጋምቤላ ተልከው የነበሩ ታላላቅ ሲቪሎችና የጦር መኮንኖች ልጅ ይልማ ዴሬሣ፤ ልጅ ጌታቸው ዘውገ፤ የሻምበል ላቀው ሀብተ ሚካኤል፤ የሻምበል ጣሰው አይችሉህም፤ ከጥቂት ወታደሮች ጋር አራቱ ነበሩ፤

With the intention that our communication line with the British government should not be interrupted for it was through this line that we might receive the emperor's order and we need timely information about international developments as well, we sent a delegation to Gambella. Furthermore, we sent the delegates to request the support of British government in weaponry, if it would be happy to do so.

*For this mission, four high civilian and military officers, namely, Liṅ Yilma Déréssa, Liṅ Getačäw Zäwgä, Captain Laqäw Habtä Mikael, Captain Ṭasäw Ayčihim were sent to Gambella together with few soldiers.*⁴⁹⁸

This was most likely about one month before the establishment of the ‘Black Lion Organization’.⁴⁹⁹ The British document from Gambella reveals that Yīlma and his companions discussed the matter with the staff of the British consulate on June 8, 1936. Understandably, their arrival at Gambella did precede the date of discussion. From the minutes of the meeting, one can infer the fact that the request of Yīlma and other delegates was sent from Gambella most probably to Cairo via Khartoum before the June 8 meeting as the document made note of Captain

⁴⁹⁸ Tadāsā, 15-16
⁴⁹⁹ As I mentioned earlier, the Organization was established in Nāqāmté on Sāné 29, 1928 (July 6, 1936). Tadāsā, 9.

J.K. Maurice's words that "the position shown therein [the plea for Mandate] had in substance already been forwarded."⁵⁰⁰

However, what we learn from the documents about the mission of delegation recorded at Gambella by the British Consulate and preserved in FO 371/20206 needs a careful examination. In the note of a meeting held on June 8, 1936 at Gambella, attendants were listed separately as the delegates of the [Oromo], the advisors for the delegates and the representatives of the consulates. Unlike Tadäsä Mécça's list, in the British document, only Yılma Déréssa and Getačāw Zāwgä were referred to as delegates. Captain Ṭasāw *Ayčiluhim*, another member of the 'Black Lion Organization,' who was later killed at the battle of Guy which took place between the forces of *Ras İmıru* and *Däğazmač* Habtä Mariam in October 1936, was in the list of advisors together with *Fitawrari* Qän'a and *Däğazmač* Sahlä.⁵⁰¹ It is important to point out that the *Fitawrari* and the *Däğazmač* were not included in Tadäsä's list. In the British document, correspondingly, no mention was made about Captain Laqāw Habtä Mikael. The document states that *Fitawrari* Gäläta Gobäna was not present in the meeting.⁵⁰²

Surprisingly, in the British document, Yılma and Getačāw Zāwgä, as principal envoy, were not referred to as delegates of the resistance group that later became the 'Black Lion Organization' as Tadäsä noted, rather as principal envoys of the Oromo and Beni-Shangul chiefs.⁵⁰³ As we read from the Note of Meeting, 'the Delegates produced a letter of credentials signed by the *Fitawrari*⁵⁰⁴ Habtä Mariam giving them full powers to discuss and making any necessary arrangements with the British Government pursuant to the decisions made by the chief of the

⁵⁰⁰ Note on the Meeting Held on 8.6.36 at Gambella, FO 371/20206.

⁵⁰¹ Hadis, 155; Tadäsä, 70, 107.

⁵⁰² Tadäsä, 16 ; Note on the Meeting Held on 8.6.36 at Gambella, FO 371/20206

⁵⁰³ Erskine to Eden, FO 371/20206.

⁵⁰⁴ Note that the writer of the minute mistook the title of *Däğazmač* Habtä Mariam.

Western [Oromo].'⁵⁰⁵ About the decisions by the chiefs, an urgent telegram from Gambella by the British representative stated 'all Galla of Western Abyssinia have agreed together and have asked for League of Nations Mandate including Sheik Khogali Hassen (of Beni Shangul) and all these have placed themselves under orders of the consulate.'⁵⁰⁶

According to Yilma's letter to Antony Eden, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, dated 11th June, 1936, 'the head of the Confederation was *Däğazmač* Habtä Mariam Gäbrä Īgziabīher.' Yilma wrote that the *Däğazmač* appointed him chief of the delegation which was then in Gambella to get in touch with His Britannic Majesty's Government in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Yilma recalled that *Däğazmač* Habtä Mariam had taken note of the communication made to him by His Britannic Majesty's consul at Goré to the effect that Italy had defeated the Shoan army and had occupied Addis Ababa to form a new Government. Interestingly, Yilma wrote that the *Däğazmač* had also taken note of a New Provisional Government in the process of getting formed at Goré for the Western [Oromo].⁵⁰⁷

Having narrated and emphasized the semi-autonomous status of the Oromo in Western Ethiopia under their hereditary rulers and the significance of their westward economic relations than its eastward attachment, Yilma stressed that *Däğazmač* Habtä Mariam was then busy in organizing civil administration. According to him, the *Däğazmač* had so far set up Health Office, Financial and Commercial Department, Political and Foreign Relation Department, Army and Police Department, and a communication Department. By establishing a model army, Yilma kept on arguing, under the direction of young and trained officers and by taking a firm action the *Däğazmač* had already saved the provinces of Western Oromo from chaos which had infested

⁵⁰⁵ Note on the Meeting Held on 8.6.36 at Gambella, FO 371/20206

⁵⁰⁶ Situations in Western Abyssinia, Telegram No.511, 1st June, 1936, FO 371/20206.

⁵⁰⁷ Yilma Déréssa to Anthony Eden, June 11, 1936, FO 371/20206.

the rest of Ethiopia as the result of Italian invasion. Reminding the Secretary of State that he had already written to him the decisions of the Western Oromo Chiefs, Yilma pointed out that the British government had so far taken decision to act through the League of Nations alone as far as the affairs of this country is concerned.⁵⁰⁸

Not so long after the Gambella mission, Yilma's relation with the *Däğazmač* and other Oromo chiefs (as a principal delegation) seems to have come to an end because of the Bonäyyaa incident.⁵⁰⁹ The Black Lions were forced to leave Näqämté for Gimbi. At the end of September or the beginning of October, according to Haddis, Yilma Déréssa together with Dr. Aläma-Wärq Bāyānā and Lieutenant Bākūrā, came to Goré and discussed the situation with *Ras* Īmīru Hailä Sīllassé.⁵¹⁰ But, Tadäsä only mentioned Dr. Aläma-Wärq and Yilma Mängäša and he did not refer to Yilma Déréssa among the five members of the envoy. Be that as it may, in a while, traveling from Ghimbi to Ilu Aba Bora, almost all members of the 'Black Lion Organization' were united with *Ras* Īmīru's forces at Supe in early October.⁵¹¹

The available sources clearly indicate, therefore, that Yilma Déréssa was involved in both apparently differing movements (the 'Black Lion Organization' and the 'Western [Oromo] Confederation'). However, except Pankhurst's passing reference, there is no serious academic attempt in the scanty literature on the topic to delve into the intricate question of ambivalence rendezvous.⁵¹² Therefore, to have a better understanding of the apparently paradoxical involvement of my subject of the study, it is worthwhile to situate the developments in the

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁹ Tesema, "The Bonayyaa Incident...", 271-275.

⁵¹⁰ Haddis, 148; Tadäsä, 53.

⁵¹¹ Tadäsä, 49-61.

⁵¹² Pankhurst in his short encyclopedic entry noted that the young Oromo nobleman *Līg* Yilma Déréssa just before, still engaged in the separatist "Western Galla Confederation" project was member of the Black Lion Organization. See Pankhurst, "Tīqur Anbäsa," 920-921.

broader context. This, indeed, takes into account the assessment of not only the local but also the national and international interests in western and southwestern Ethiopia.

Needless to say that before Emperor Hailä-Sillassé left Addis Ababa for abroad, he appointed *Bitwädäd* Waldä Şadiq Goşu as a president of the Provisional Ethiopian Government and Gore became the seat of the Government. The Emperor also sent “the column of cars with the government functionaries to Gore and placed them under the authority of old Welde Tsadiq.”⁵¹³ *Ras* İmiru was not informed regarding the fate of the Emperor until he had listened to news from Radio Djibouti while he was in Däbrä Marqos. He knew about neither the Provisional Government at Goré nor Wäldä Şadiq’s appointment up until he crossed the River Abay at Gindä Bärät in early May. By then, Italians had already occupied Addis Ababa and the resistance group to which Yılma belonged had left Ambo for Näqämté. When *Ras* İmiru arrived at Goré on 27th June, 1936, he changed his plan to go to exile in the Sudan as a result of his consent with Wäldä-Şadiq and a letter from the emperor. Interestingly, the emperor commanded *Ras* İmiru to include *Bilata* Déréssa in the Povisional Government.⁵¹⁴ Subsequently, İmiru wrote:

ከውጭ አገርም በሌላ እንኳን ባይሆን በመሳሪያና በስንቅ፤ በጥይት እርዳታ ለማግኘት በንግሊዝ ቆንስል በኩል ጠይቀን ምንም ማግኘት አልቻልንም ነበር። ቆንስሉም ግን፤ በዙሪያችን ካሉት አገር ሹማምንት ልዩ ልዩ የሆነ አሳብ ስለሚደርሰው፤ ደፍሮ ለማገዝም፤ አሳቡንም ለማስታወቅ አለመቻሉን ይነግረን ነበር። ያንጊዜም ቆንስሉ ከቢትወደድ ወልደ ጸድቅም ይልቅ ባለስልጣን መስሎ ነበር የሚታየው።

Though we requested foreigners to support us in weapons and rations via the British consulate, we got nothing. The consul neither dares to help us nor informs us his plans for he was receiving a variety of information from local chiefs. At that time,

⁵¹³ Angelo Del Boca, 182.

⁵¹⁴ Hailä-Sillassé, *Hiywätēna Yä’ityopīya İrmīğa, Hulātāña Māşhaf* (Addis Ababa: Birhanina Salam Printing House, 1966 E.C.), 24-25; İmiru Hailä Sillassé, 281-284.

*more than Bitwädäd Wäldä Tsadiq, the consul seems to have been considered an authority.*⁵¹⁵

What Erskine himself asserted in his confidential letter to Mr. Eden dated 30th May, 1936, but received on 18th June, 1936 was in agreement with *Ras İmīru*'s assessment on the status of the consul. Erskine reported:

*The Galla Chiefs of these provinces, namely, Dadgasmach Hapte Mariam Kumsa of Naqamte and Fitawrari Johannes and Fitawrari Hosana and Sheik Khogali, Sultan of Beni Shangul have conferred together at Nkempty and agreed, as their Amhara overlords no longer exist, to unite the Galla people of Western Abyssinia and to offer themselves through this consulate to the League of Nations for reorganization under a future Government; and they have accepted my suggestion that their provinces should be placed under their own governorship, under the leadership of the Government of Western Abyssinia, which I formed on the fall of Addis Ababa to be directed by Bitwädäd Wäldä Sadik.*⁵¹⁶

From the above two extracts we can realize that during that period of chaos and confusion especially after the defeat of Ethiopian forces at Mayçāw, the status of the British Consul at Gore seems to have been elevated as he was in control of the major channel of communication in the area. Since then, there was no communication with *Bitwädäd Wäldä Tsadiq* whom the consul was using as a nominal head of the government.⁵¹⁷ From *Yīlma*'s letter to Mr. Anthony Eden too, we can highlight the fact that *Däğazmač Habtä Mariam* had also taken note of the communication made to him by His Britannic Majesty's consul at Gore that a New Provisional Government was in the process of getting formed at Gore for the Western [Oromo].⁵¹⁸

During that time, Erskine wrote, 'the two factors which help most are, firstly, that the consulate was never recognized either by the Abyssinian officials or by the native as a consulate, in the

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 284

⁵¹⁶ Confidential letter Consul Erskine to Eden, 30 May 1936 (Received 18 June 1936), FO 371/20206.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁸ *Yīlma Dérēssa* to Anthony Eden, June 11, 1936, FO 371/20206.

European sense, but rather as a Residency guiding the administration of the country.’ On that basis, Erskine added, ‘the consulate had been approached for advice and guidance for the last twenty years, and was being so approached at that moment; and it was in this capacity that the consulate was guiding the Western provinces in the crisis.’⁵¹⁹

Returning, then, to Yīlma’s double engagement, it would not seem an improbable conclusion that the consul at Goré, given his influence and power during the period of chaos and confusion, drew both parties to the same political scheme probably to protect the province from Italian occupation. However, Erskine did not invent what had not been there. Undoubtedly, when news came in May 1936 that Italian forces had occupied Addis Ababa and the emperor had fled the country, “the [chiefs of] Western Oromo took the opportunity of the fall of the central government to declare their independence from Ethiopian rule.”⁵²⁰ To this effect, they sent a delegation to the British Consulate at Gambella, among others, Yīlma Déréssa, Getačāw Zāwgā and Captain Tasāw Ayčīluhm.⁵²¹ Concurrently, the resistance group which later established an organization at Nāqāmté identifying itself as ‘Black Lion’ had sought to resume its military and political struggle against Italian rule. Its leading members such as Yīlma Déréssa, Getačāw

⁵¹⁹ Confidential letter Consul Erskine to Eden, 30 May 1936(Received 18 June 1936), FO 371/20206.

⁵²⁰ As Ezkiel noted “in the southwest, the hereditary ruler of Jimma, Abba Jobir Abba Jifar, had already been in communication with the Italians before the fall of the capital and was apparently ready to switch to the Italian side as soon as the situation allowed. Later on he offered 30 Maria Theresa thalers for each Amhara head.” Ezekiel Gebissa, 77; Hadis Alāmayāhu, p.167; Tadāsā Méča, 77-79; Īmīru Hailā Sīllassé, 293. Among the local rulers of Wällāga, *Fitawrari* Johannes Joté and *Fitawrari* Osāna Joté who had long appealed for the British or Sudanese occupation of Wällāga, returned from Addis Ababa to Sayo on the fall of the capital and they had seized the region of government in the name of Oromo people, but had sent to this consulate to say that they place themselves under the new Government of Gore for the time being, on the understanding that the future of the Oromo people be secured, under the new peace terms, from the oppression and state of serfdom which prevailed under the former despotic Tāfāri regime. Confidential letter Consul Erskine to Eden, 30 May 1936(Received 18 June 1936), FO 371/20206.

⁵²¹ Note on the Meeting Held on 8.6.36 at Gambella, FO 371/20206.

Zāwgä and Captain Tasāw Ayčīluhm traveled to Gambella in an attempt to accomplish an apparently paradoxical political goal to their organization.⁵²²

Behind these two developments, a brief consideration of British interest in Ethiopia seems to be pertinent. Written sources reveal that Great Britain was not a mere spectator when Ethiopia was on the verge of Italian invasion. A committee of seven members was appointed in pursuance of a suggestion put forward in a letter from the Foreign Office of the 6th March, 1935. The major objective of the committee was to address the question of “how far British interests in Ethiopia and in the countries bordering on Ethiopia would be affected by the absorption of the whole or part of Ethiopia by Italy.”⁵²³ In its conclusions, the committee noted:

The most vital British interest in Ethiopia remains Lake Tana and the Nile Basin. This is also a vital interest of Egypt, which His majesty's Government are bound to protect. In the event of disappearance of Ethiopia as an independent state, His Majesty's Government should aim at securing territorial control over Lake Tana and a suitable corridor linking it to the Sudan.

*Similarly, in the event of the establishment of the Italian control over Ethiopia, His Majesty's Government should take steps to secure the safeguarding of British interests in the other tributaries of the Nile flowing in Ethiopia, e.g., the Sobat, by obtaining a definite undertaking that no works will be constructed on those rivers interrupting or diminishing their flow without prior concurrence of His Majesty's Government and of the Egyptian Government.*⁵²⁴

This was before Italy openly invaded Ethiopia since October 1935. In due course, the fall of Addis Ababa heightened Britain's concern over possible Italian designs to link Ethiopia and Libya through the Sudan. Accordingly, shortly thereafter, Marius Brophil, a British

⁵²² Tadäsä, 9-10.

⁵²³ Having had seven meetings, the committee produced a 34 pages report known as ‘The Maffey Report’ named after the chairman of the committee, J.L.Maffey. “The Maffey Report: Report of an Inter-Departmental Committee on British Interests in Ethiopia June 18, 1935”, in *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939*, Second Series, eds. W.N. Medlicott, Douglas Dankin and M.C. Lambert, Vol. XIV (London: Her Majesties Stationary Office, 1976), 743.

⁵²⁴ “The Maffey Report....”775

Intelligence agent, “was flown out to Gore for the purpose of collecting from local leaders expressions of support for annexation of the region by the Sudan.”⁵²⁵ What makes the request of local chiefs to establish a British mandate protectorate complex is that applications were submitted by different parties at different period. For example, a letter was received by district commissioner [of] Gambella on 7th June, 1936 from *Fitawrari* Osäna, brother of Oromo Chief Johannes of Säyo. Alberto Sbacchi noted that “the British Consul Erskine at Gore encouraged Oromo chiefs to remain within the British orbit even though his government had not officially authorized him to do so.”⁵²⁶

Interestingly enough, the territorial extent of the ‘Western [Oromo] Confederation’ encompassed duly the areas covered by all the left tributaries of the Blue Nile to which the Maffey Report paid special attention.⁵²⁷ Stretching westwards and southwestwards from the central plateau of Ethiopia to the semi-arid lowlands of the Sudan, the claimed territories of ‘The Western [Oromo] Confederation’ are endowed with abundant water resources, animals, forests, minerals and vast tracts of arable land. Rivers like Gudär, Fincä’a, Angär, Dédéssa, Dabus, Tumät,

⁵²⁵ Osäna’s letter reads as follows: “To His Majesty, The King of England, London England. We, who in time past have suffered greatly and have been the oppressed, desire that Your Majesty may become our protector. This is the desire of the majority of Oromo chiefs and people: thus the time is present for action that we may present our petition in person before you and the League of Nations. We desire for an aero plane to come to take three of our members as representatives of Oromo nation to Europe. As time is very short we pray you to (undecipherable) this permission.” District commissioner, the telegram continues, adds that these Oromo chiefs do not now intend to visit Gore before the arrival there of *Ras* Īmīru and he emphasized that they will not again submit to Amhara rule without fighting. Spencer, 81; Telegram Addressed to Foreign Office No. 534, 8th June, 1936, FO 371/20206.

⁵²⁶ Alberto Sbacchi, *Legacy of Bitterness, Ethiopia and Fascist Italy, 1935-1941* (New Jersey: The Red Sea Press, 1997), 167.

⁵²⁷ According to the delegates, “the political entity encompassed territory from the Blue Nile in the north, the river Gudi [Gudär] in the east and the province of Maḡi in the south. Yīlma Déréssa and his colleagues did not mention the western boundary of the confederation. However, since the name of the ruler of Bela Šangul, *Šeyh* Hoḡälé Hassān was in the list of chiefs, the Ethio-Sudanese border seems to have been considered as a western boundary of the Confederation.” Yīlma Déréssa to Anthony Eden, June 11, 1936, FO 371/20206.

Šärqolé, Gibé, Wama, , Bərbir, Baro, Gabba, and many others flow from the high terrain of the province (above the average elevation of 5,000 feet) towards the lowlands.⁵²⁸

Though documents revealed Yılma's involvement in the establishment of 'Western Oromo Confederation' in June 1936, he most often spent the period between early May 1936 to late December 1936 as a member of the resistance group until the whole army under the leadership of *Ras İmüru* surrendered to the Italian forces at Goğäb. Yılma, thus, like any other nationalist member of the group, seems to have been involved in patriotic activities in south western Ethiopia for about eight months.⁵²⁹ At last, Yılma was said to have served as a principal advisor to *Ras İmüru* when the latter was encircled by Italian forces at Goğäb in late December 1936.⁵³⁰

After an unsuccessful military campaign from Goré first to Wälläga then to Ğıma, the resistance group to which Yılma Déréssa belonged was said to be surrounded by the Italian forces at the River Goğäb. Surpassed militarily, the resistance group under *Ras İmüru* was weakened due to low fighting morale. Meanwhile, a couple of months before their surrender, *Bilatta* Déréssa Amänté met *Ras İmüru* at Nolé Kaba while the former was at Çutta fleeing from Italians as they entered Addis Ababa. Yılma too visited his home country with his wife Wäyzäro Qidist while other members of the 'Black Lion Organization' were camped at Gimbi.⁵³¹ Having exchanged ideas about the numerical disadvantage of the resistance group, *Bilatta* told *Ras İmüru* his plan to leave Ethiopia for the Sudan and went away with words of farewell.⁵³²

⁵²⁸ Hailu Wäldä Amanuel, "The Geographical Characteristics of Western Ethiopia: Wälläga," *Ethiopian Geographical Journal*. Vol. 1, No. 1 and 2, (1963): 31-43 ;22-38.

⁵²⁹ As Haddis narrated in his memoir, Dr. Yaläm Wärq Bāyānā, the president of the 'Black Lion Organization' had carried a rifle during their patriotic trek from Gore to Jimma, even if he was a civilian and political leader of the resistance group. From this circumstantial fact, it would not seem an improbable conclusion that Yılma was also armed. Haddis, 155.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*, 200.

⁵³¹ Informant: Täklé Roro Bākäre.

⁵³² İmüru Hailä Sillassé, 291.

In spite of the fact that *Ras* Īmīru had called upon military officials from Holläta and other dignitaries for consultation, Yīlma seems to have been his chief advisor.⁵³³ Having considered the shortage of logistic and provisions as well as the waning fighting morale of the army, *Ras* Īmīru and his advisors decided to surrender under the following three conditions: 1) if the Eritreans who defected from Italian forces and fought along with Ethiopians would not face particular retribution other than the sentence which the *Ras* forces would face, and if the Italians would declare amnesty for them, 2) if the members of the 'Black Lion Organization' who burned the aeroplane and killed Italians at Bonnāyaa in Wällāga would not face a special penalty, and 3) if all soldiers and civilians who were fighting against the Italians under *Ras* Īmīru until the day of their surrender at Goḡāb would not face special punishment unlike the rest of Ethiopians who participated in the resistance movement.⁵³⁴

As a war captive Yīlma Déréssa together with few prisoners of war travelled to Addis Ababa from Ġīma most probably by aeroplane after the European New Year. Arriving at the capital, it seems probable that Yīlma, together with the rest of the captives, gave personal information about himself at the Political Office of the Italian administration at the Gänätä Lī'ul Palace. Sources are not clear where Yīlma was living shortly after his capture as his father *Bīlatta* Déréssa had left the country for the Sudan earlier and his elder sister had begun living in Çutta with her husband, Déréssa Dhanké.⁵³⁵ There is a speculation that most often he was accustomed to visit his schoolmates in England, Yosef and Biniam Wārqnāh who used to live around Šola in the eastern neighborhood of Addis Ababa.⁵³⁶

⁵³³ Hadis, 200.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*, 186-187, 200.

⁵³⁵ Īmīru Hailā Sillassé, 291; *Bīlatta* Déréssa Amānté Obituary.

⁵³⁶ Informant: Sofia Yīlma

Sometime in mid January 1937, Yılma and Hadis Alāmayāhu were summoned to the Political Office at Sīdīst Kilo and an Italian official informed them, based on ‘the request of *Ras* Īmīru and *Dāğazmač* Tayé Gulīlaté, which the two of them had to leave Ethiopia for Italy ‘to join Benito Mussolini’. This incident in January 1937 was undeniably a decisive event in the lives of Yılma and Hadis as almost all their friends and other educated young Ethiopians was butchered in a systematic manner after a couple of weeks especially in Addis Ababa during the Graziani massacre in February 1937. Hadis recalled how relatives and colleagues expressed their sorrow for the two exiles as the news of their deportation was heard. However, their banishment turned out to be a blessing in disguise.⁵³⁷

Yılma and Haddis left Addis for Asmāra by aeroplane and were forced to travel to Massawa on the same day they arrived at Asmara because a ship which would sail to Italy was about to depart from the port that very night. Since their first encounter with Italian officers at Addis Ababa Hadis noted that Yılma attempted to defy the generosity and invitation of their captors. They arrived at Napoli most probably before 19th February, 1937 for it was later on at the island of Ponza that they heard the news of the Graziani Massacre in Addis Ababa.⁵³⁸

As soon as Yılma and Haddis set their foot in Napoli, authorities pushed them to visit Rome before they were taken to Ponza. In the island, other than Ethiopian deportees such as *Ras* Īmīru and *Dāğazmač* Tayé Gulīlaté, there were Italian political prisoners including famous thinkers, professors and journalists. Yılma and Hadis joined their countrymen who were incarcerated at the neighborhood in Ponza called Forna. There they were living in the house of a widowed Italian who was living together with her father and her sons. The government rented the house

⁵³⁷ Haddis Alāmayāhu, 203- 204.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*, 204, 216 and 219.

from her and it also commissioned her to provide meals as well as house cleaning services for them. Few policemen who were assigned to watch over especially the *Ras* and the *Däğazmač* shared rooms with them in the compound. Yılma and Haddis took pleasure in the debates between *Ras* İmüru, a comparatively progressive noble and *Däğazmač* Tayé Gulilaté, a conservative dignitary. Yılma, because of his educational status, seemed to have enjoyed the admiration and respect of Mr. Salvatore, the administrator of the island. In general terms, the commissariat of Ponza had a high regard for *Ras* İmüru, too. Unlike some authorities at the Italian colonial office, the administrator never expressed a feeling of superiority.⁵³⁹

During their stay at Ponza for almost two years and 10 months, all of them lived in comparative ease and respite due to the moderate governor of the Island. There was no sanction on books and radio receivers. Especially, Yılma and Hadis could move from place to place without any restrictions by authorities and policemen. After Salvatore was replaced by another commissar, their movements in the island were brought under tight control. Fortunately, except *Däğazmač* Tayé Gulilaté whom the Italians made free a year and half ago, the three of them were transferred to the island of Lipori where Yugoslav Revolutionaries were incarcerated. Within a year's time, Yılma was sent back to Addis Ababa most probably before September 1940. He was assigned in the Political Office and begun his short-lived service for Italian government. It is important to point out that during his exile in Ponza and Lipori, he had developed his Italian language skills.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁹Haddis recalled that commissioner Salvatore used to remark that no Italian living in Ponza was learnt like Yılma. Sometimes, Haddis recalled in his memoir, Mr. Salvatore took Yılma away from home by his motor cycle and spent all day long with him. *Ibid.*, 204, 213-216, 219

⁵⁴⁰In the course of their transfer Yılma had served as a language interpreter between *Ras* İmüru and Italian authorities at Lipori Island. *Ibid.*, 223-228.

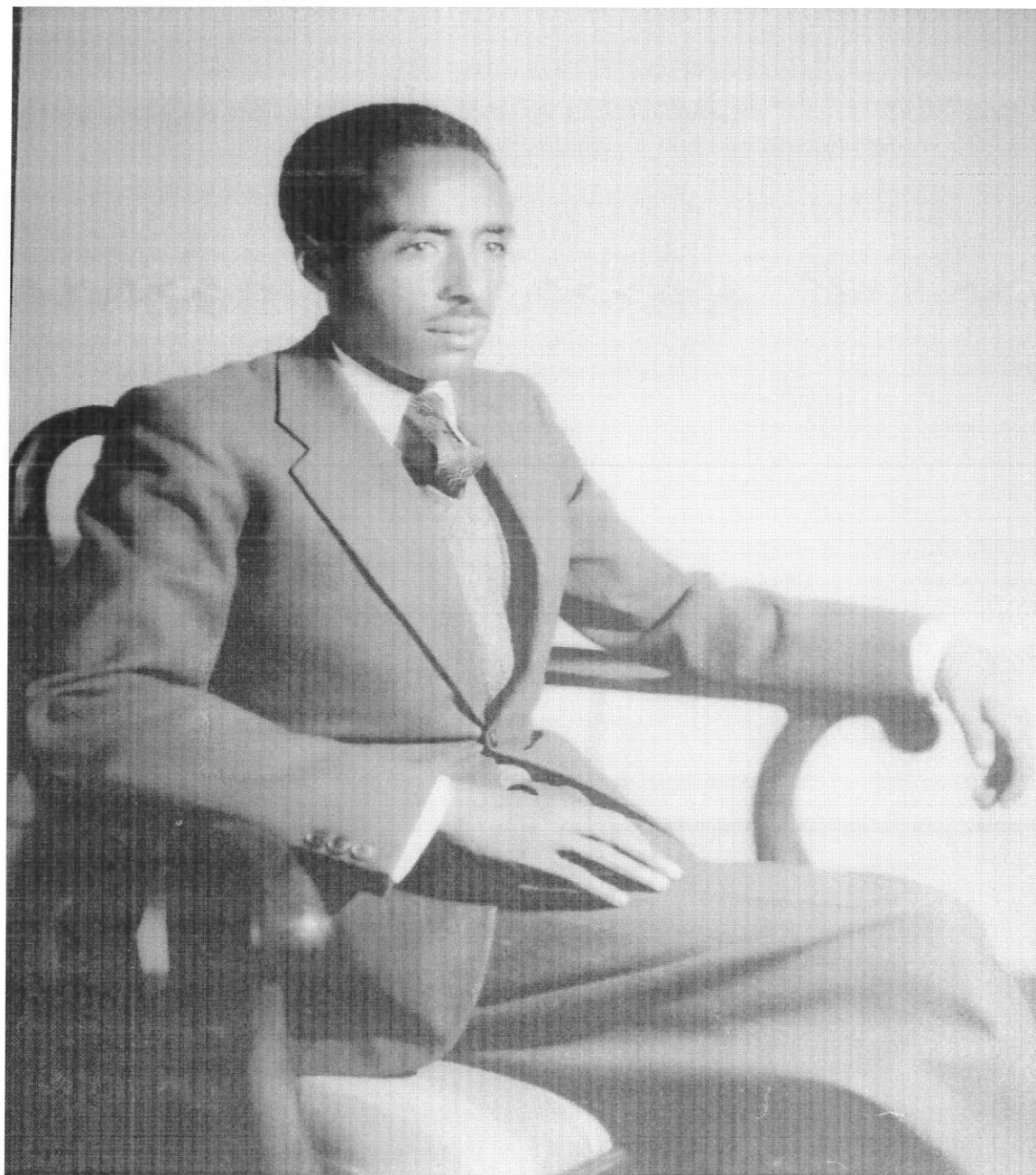


Figure 5. Yilma Déréssa in Ponza, Italy (*Ca.* 1937-1939).⁵⁴¹

⁵⁴¹ In Sofya Yilma's Possession.

Given the methodological problem especially in consulting Italian documents, it is difficult to uncover what Yilma was doing in the *Ufficio Politico*. Rather, a reference to Yilma Déréssa in May 1941 deals with an incident at the very day of the Emperor's arrival at Addis Ababa. As Angelo Del Boca noted, "from a loud speaker mounted on an automobile, however, it was possible to hear the voice of the future minister Yilma Déréssa, who was saying: 'Today, five years ago, the Italians entered our city to murder and pillage; today, five years after, our King returns, with the aid of a just God and of the English'".⁵⁴²

To sum up, an account of the social background of Yilma Déréssa clearly show that especially his family had adjusted itself to the new developments at Addis Ababa following the incorporation of the region into the centralized Ethiopian state. "For many individual nobles [and their families], the system meant new opportunities for fortune and fame; for many others, it signified indignity or ruin, against which they rebelled; for most it involved a protracted and difficult process of adaptation and conversion across succeeding generations."⁵⁴³ The formative years of Yilma Déréssa clearly exemplifies the latter phenomenon. Still in the process of adjustment and compromise, *Bilatta Déréssa Amänté*, in direct contrast to his father, didn't rely on elephant hunting, slavery and land lordship. Instead, abandoning the privileges he used to enjoy due to these modes of livelihood, he engaged first in long distance trade and eventually he became state functionary. He also made himself an advocate of new developments in the country. Being instrumental for the introduction of modern education in his governorship in the 1910s; Déréssa Amänté played a decisive role in shaping the future life of Yilma Déréssa. Hence, Déréssa initiated the process of adaptation and conversion across succeeding generations

⁵⁴² However, Täklä Şadiq criticized Yilma for not acknowledging the contributions of patriots to the liberation day, Täklä Şadiq Mäkuria, *Yä Hiywät Tariké*, 88; Angelo Del Boca, 209.

⁵⁴³ Anderson, 47.

in response to the advent of the centralizing Ethiopian state. Yīlma, having attended his higher education in Europe, was recruited to serve the emerging absolutist state since 1933 and began to play his functionalist roles in the Ethiopian government. However, as Fascist Italy invaded Ethiopia, Yīlma was engaged in two apparently divergent politico-military movements: “The Western [Oromo] Confederation” and the “Black Lion Organization”. This phenomenon appears to have situated Yīlma between the contrasting interests of Oromo nationalism and Ethiopian patriotism which were mainly precipitated by external interventions.

Chapter Four

Preliminary Responsibilities and Initiatives:

(1941-1942)

Yīlma Déréssa was assigned as Secretary of Foreign Affairs on 2nd July 1941. His appointment to this position seems to have been disclosed to him, besides the official letter, verbally by the Minister of Pen, Wäldä-Giorgis Wäldä-Yohannīs.⁵⁴⁴ In a while, he was transferred to the Ministry of Finance. Official sources, however, disagree on the very date of Yīlma's transfer from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Ministry of Finance. According to *Negarit Gazeta* and a document at the Ministry, the Emperor appointed Yīlma Director General in the Ministry of Finance on 8th August, 1941.⁵⁴⁵ As Yīlma received 300 Maria Theresa Thalers as a salary for the month of Nāhase, 1933 E.C. the date on the *Negarit Gazeta* seems to be correct.⁵⁴⁶ Contrary to these, a document of the Ministry of Pen produced in a later period (1970) and copied to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs revealed that he was assigned in the Ministry of Finance on 1st September, 1941. It seems probable that this document at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs lacks accuracy as it also gives us an extra date (September 5) for the same appointment.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁴ Sālāmon Gäbrāmariam to Yīlma Déréssa, Hamle 6, 1962 E.C. Folder No. 1/1-y Personal File, MOFa; Appeal from Family Members of Yīlma Déréssa to the Provisional Military Administrative Council in Sofiya Yīlma's possession. (Hearafter, Family Appeal to PMAC), Tīr 22, 1967 E.C..

⁵⁴⁵ *Negarit Gazeta*, General Notice No. 1; Brief biographical account from Yīlma Déréssa to Editor of the Institute for Research in Biography, 3rd September, 1945, Personal File, HO, MOFED.

⁵⁴⁶ Ministry of Pen to the Ministry of Finance, Dated 25th June 1942, Folder No. A 2624, Ṭäqalay Gīmḡa Bēt(ṬGB, MOFED) ; Bägīrond Gäzahīñ Gäbrä Mariam to Administrative Department, 12 November, 1974, Personal File, HO, MOFED.

⁵⁴⁷ Of course, he himself reminded his assistants that they started on working in the institution in September, 1941. Memo of Yīlma Déréssa to Officials of the Ministry of Finance, Megabit 10, 1934 E.C., Folder No. A 2934-2957, ŠM, MOFED. While consulting the personal file of Yīlma Déréssa both at the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in my archival research, I couldn't find the majority of official letters addressed to my subject of the study by the *Tsähaḡé Tizaz* (Minister of Pen) which had been announcing the appointment and transfer of Yīlma Déréssa from one position to the other within a Ministry or to another Ministry. Fortunately, *Nägarit Gazeta* has duly filled this gap as it published, among many other things, official appointments since 1942. Interestingly, in 1970 Yīlma Déréssa requested officially the Ministry of the Pen copies of the letters of his appointments. In response, the then state minister of the Ministry sent a one page letter which listed the dates of

Whatever the date might be, Yılma left the Ministry of Foreign Affairs without substantial contribution to the nascent institution. Of course, in a “Ministry” established in one room and two personnel, specifically, Yılma and his chief *Ato* Lorenzo Ta’izaz, what he could carry out practically within two months was nothing other than developing a memorandum to organize the institution, and so did he.⁵⁴⁸

Apparently, it was within a week of Emperor Hailä Sillassé’s entrance into Addis Ababa in May 1941 that the sovereign reinstated the post-liberation ministerial system of the Ethiopian government that had begun during the reign of Emperor Mīlilīk II.⁵⁴⁹ At this very juncture, the emperor appointed only seven ministers and sources are silent on the reestablishment of the Ministry of Finance until Yılma’s transfer from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁵⁵⁰ Interestingly, while he had been working in the latter institution, the Emperor gave him a supplementary assignment.

በውጭ ጉዳይ ጸሐፊ ከመሆን ሌላ የኢኮኖሚክ ጉዳይ ሥራ ዋና አመልካች ሆነህ ትሠራለህ፡፡ ለዚህም የተለየ ረዳት ትቀበላለህ፡፡

Yılma’s appointment since July, 1941 to February, 1969 chronologically. Sälämon Gäbrāmariam to Yılma Déréssa, Hamle 6, 1962 E.C. Folder No. 1/1-y Personal File, MOFA.

⁵⁴⁸ Family Appeal to PMAC.

⁵⁴⁹ At this juncture of reinstatement, the position of the Minister for Foreign Affairs was held by *Bilatén* Getta Lorenzo Ta’izaz (1941-1942). *Bä, Itiyopiya Yä'minister Sir'at Kätäwätänbät kä 1900 gämīro Yä'täšomutün Ministīročina İndihum Yäparlamana Yäzäwd Mikīrbet Māmakīrt Yāmiyasay tarikawi Mastawāša* File No. 461, Folder No. 63.1.49. 21 NALA; Zawde Rata, *Yäqādamawi Haylä Sillassé Māngist* (New Delhi: Laxi Publications Pvt. Ltd. 2012), 424.

⁵⁵⁰ According to Harold Marcus, the date of nomination was 11 May. However, the Ethiopian calendar of Ginbot 2, 1933 was not 11th May, 1941 rather it was 10 May. Remarking on the response of the British authorities in Addis Ababa to this measure of the Emperor, Marcus pointed out that “bluster though [General Sir Philip Mitchell] might about the emperor’s impetuous action, correctly seen as a symbolic exercise of sovereignty, the military governor was forced to use Haile Sellassie’s government, and reported that ‘much of our administrative action in the past five months has been taken as a matter of convenience through these Ministries’.” See *The Politics of Empire: Ethiopia, Great Britain and the United States, 1941-1974* (New Jersey: The Red Sea Press, 1995), 9. The Ministers were *Dāğazmač* Mākonnīn İndalkačāw, Minister of Interior; Wāldā-Giorgis Wāldā-Yohannīs, Minister of Pen; Lorenzo Ta’izaz, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Gäbrä-İgziabhēr Dästa, Minister of Trade and Industry; Ayälä Gäbré, Minister of Justice; Bālačāw Yadäté, Minister of Post, Telegraph and Telephone and Mākonnīn Dästa, Minister of Education and Fine Arts. The Emperor further appointed two ministers on Yekatit 16, 1934. These were Abābā Arāgay, Minister of War and Mākonnīn Habtä-Wāld, Minister of Agriculture. Folder No. 63.1.49.21, File No. 461, NALA.

ከዚህ በቀር ከልዩ ጸሐፊያችን ጋር ተጋጥመህ ከእንግሊዝ ባለስልጣን ጋር የምንነጋገረውን ጉዳይ የተፈጸመ ያልተፈጸመ በተለየ ተከታታይነት ትሠራለህ። ወደ እንግሊዝ ባለስልጣኖች የተገባ ነገር ሁሉ በማስታወሻ እየሆነ መቅረቡ እንዲያጎድል ዋና አሳሳቢነት ያንተ ነው።

*In addition to your position in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, you will work as a chief expert on economic affairs. For this task, you will have special assistant. Furthermore, together with my special secretary, you will handle issues which I deal with the British authorities. It is also your responsibility to notify the dispatch of proper matters to the British authorities in the form of memo.*⁵⁵¹

This responsibility was given to Yilma, sources imply, after which he prepared a draft memo as per the order of the Emperor to establish the Ministry of Finance sometime between June 1941 and August 1941. As finance was an urgent necessity for the restored government, Yilma had to write down his note in a rush and submit it to the Emperor without delay.⁵⁵² Then, he began his long and crucial state service at the Ministry of Finance with which his name is closely associated for the rest of his life.

All the available sources shed light on economic and financial issues in which Yilma was engaged in the immediate aftermath of Ethiopia's liberation in 1941. The role that Yilma played in the process of the reestablishment of the Ministry of Finance during six months before the signing of the Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement of 31st January 1942 is considerable.⁵⁵³ During those times, indeed, the economic situation of the country as well as the financial aid of the British government to the Imperial Government of Ethiopia was more of a matter of war time politics

⁵⁵¹ Personal File of Yilma Déréssa, A letter without date and an official seal. Dictated to me through telephone on April 16, 2015 by an archivist of the Ministry of Pen, Anonymous.

⁵⁵² Memorandum to establish Ministry of Finance in Ethiopia, Yilma Déréssa, Not Dated, Folder No. A2934-2957, *ŠM*, MOFED; Family Appeal to PMAC.

⁵⁵³ Stafford to Private Secretary to His Imperial Majesty, A Report on the Ministry of Finance (1st February, 1942-30th September, 1942), 19th October, 1942, IES, MS 3691, G-51.

than legal and diplomatic issues.⁵⁵⁴ Since the Agreement too, Yilma and his subordinates shaped the foundation and expansion of the institution until 1949.⁵⁵⁵

Yilma began his career in the Ministry of Finance on the eve of the Ethiopian new year of 1934 (August 1941) and continued his state service as a high ranking government official at various institutions until he was imprisoned by the Provisional Military Administrative Council (*Därg*) in June 1974.⁵⁵⁶ But, how did Yilma, together with others, re-establish the Ministry of Finance in 1941? In what crucial activities was Yilma engaged while he attempted to lay the foundation of the institution? What were the particular contributions of Yilma? These are, therefore, the basic questions which I will address in this chapter that comprises four sections covering the period from September 1941 to November 1942.

In the first section, I will present an account of the major preliminary works with which Yilma was occupied. Among these, delineating the powers and responsibilities of the Ministry vis-à-vis regional governors as well as other institutions of the government and preparing the land tax proclamations will be discussed. Yilma's accomplishments in laying the foundation of the Ministry will be the focus of the next section. The third part aims at reconstructing the commencement of public finance in the Ethiopian Government, of course, with particular

⁵⁵⁴ For instance, the issue of currency had been the concern of the British authorities and Emperor Haile Selassie as early as March 1941. It is interesting to underscore that during the liberation campaign the British authorities and the Emperor agreed to make the MT dollar as the legal tender in Ethiopia. The currency proclamation which was published most likely before April 3, 1941 indicates that in order that trade might not be impeded by the shortage of small change in Ethiopia until change for dollars was minted, the authorities gave permission for Italian notes and coinage of 10 lira denomination and under to be used. Moreover, as the forces of the British Army and their Allies were in Ethiopia bringing their own currency with them, rupees, piastres and East African Shillings were authorized to circulate at rates which would be notified wherever the said forces were stationed. M.S. Lush to D.A. Sandford, 25th March, 1941, IES, MS 3691.G-51; Draft Currency Proclamation, IES, MS 3691.G-51.

⁵⁵⁵ Memorandum from Yilma Deressa to Emperor Haile Selassie, Sene 11, 1937 E.C., Folder No. A6042-6070, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁵⁵⁶ John Markakis (1974) wrote mistakenly that Yilma entered the Ministry of Finance in 1942, as a Director-General. See, 226. Memo of Yilma Dērēssa to Officials of the Ministry of Finance, Mägabīt 10, 1934, Folder No. A 2934-2957, *ŠM*, MOFED (See Appendix II).

emphasis to Yilma Déréssa. The last part attempts to situate Yilma's place in the initial struggle to introduce national currency. These four sections, therefore, deal with the period (from September 1941 to November 1942) when my subject of study, only as Director General and was essentially preoccupied with preliminary works in establishing the Ministry of Finance. Interestingly, Yilma himself considered the undertakings with which he was occupied in this period weighty.⁵⁵⁷

4.1. Centralized Taxation

As mentioned earlier, prior to Yilma's transfer from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Ministry of Finance, he had prepared a confidential memorandum to establish the latter Ministry. Apologetically, Yilma stressed that he could have prepared a comprehensive memo had it not been for his Majesty's order to note down and submit it hurriedly. The 12 pages memo was prepared in an informative manner so that a reader would figure out easily the major tasks, responsibilities and powers of the Ministry of Finance.⁵⁵⁸ The right to collect all revenues in the country, Yilma explained at the beginning, should be an exclusive right of the Ministry of Finance. Correspondingly, all issues related to government expenditure also are the jurisdiction of the same institution. In his suggestion on tax collection, he wrote:

መንግስት ላስተዳደርና ለሌላም ጉዳይ ወጭ የሚያደርገውን ገንዘብ
ሲሰበስብ ንግድና ስራ በሚያስፋፋ፤ ሕዝብ በማይጎዳ፤ ሐብት
 በሚያበረክት፤ ከፖለቲካ ወገን ሕዝብ በማያስቀይም አኳሆን⁵⁵⁹

⁵⁵⁷ Memorandum from Yilma Déréssa to the officials of the Ministry of Finance, Mägabīt 10, 1934 E.C., Folder No. A 2934-2957. ŠM, MOFED; Prison Testament (See Appendix I); Family Appeal to PMAC; Informants: Sofya Yilma, Asfaw Damjé, Bā'īdā Mariam Mākonīn and Bulēa Dāmāqsa; Christopher Clapham, 157.

⁵⁵⁸ The fact that he was forced to prepare a note hastily was recalled also in a family letter addressed to PMAC after Yilma was imprisoned. Family Appeal to PMAC.

⁵⁵⁹ Instead of አኳኢ (akuhuan), Yilma sometimes used to spell አኳሆን (akuahon) in his earlier notes and draft manuscripts. Interestingly enough, in his Amharic book on the history of Ethiopia in the 16th century, this misspelling of Amharic letter was repeated. See Yilma Déréssa, *Yä' Itiyoṗiyya Tarik*....66 and 222. Besides, in an appeal written by his family members to PMAC, in a sentence which was probably quoted from Yilma's original notebook.

ማድረግ አለበት። አንድ አንድ ግብር ወይም ቀረጥ ለጊዜው ገቢ ቢያመጣ እንኳን በንግድና በሥራ ላይ ስለሚጫን ወደፊት ያገሩን ሐብት ስለሚጎዳው አይጠቅምም። ኢኮኖሚስቶች ሲተርፉ የወርቅ እንቁላል የምትጥልልህን ዝይ አትረዳት ይላሉ።

ገቢ ቢያመጣ እንኳን መሰብሰቡ ብዙ ሠራተኛና ወጭ የሚፈልግ ግብርና ቀረጥ አለ። ይህን የመሰለውን ግብር ማስገበር ለመንግስቱ አይጠቅመውም፤ ሕዝቡንም በከንቱ ያበላጩዋል የሚሰበሰበው ገንዘብ ከመንግስቱ ጓዳ የሚደርሰው የሰራተኞች ደሞዝና ሌላም ወጭ ከተደረገለት በኋላ ሥለሆነ መሰብሰቡ ብዙ ወጭ የሌለበት ግብርና ቀረጥ ማግኘት ያስፈልጋል።

Whilst the state collects taxes for administrative and other expenses, it has to be in the way that expands trade and employment opportunity, does not overstrain the people, accumulate wealth, and does not make tax payers resentful politically. No matter how they generate revenue, some taxes and dues, imposed heavily on trade and other professions, are harmful as they do affect the wealth of the country in the future. There is economists' favorite saying that advises 'you should not kill the golden goose'.

There is also costly and labor intensive revenue. This is not of use for the government. It would also disappoint the tax payer. For this kind of revenue arrives at the state treasury after the government spends much on workers and other expenses, the government has to seek out other low cost taxes.⁵⁶⁰

Yilma's note dealt essentially with the issue of taxes and dues. Given the serious financial problem that confronted the recently restored Ethiopian Government, it is no wonder that the question of revenue came to the fore more than the issue of expenditure. In his conclusion, however, Yilma emphatically advised the Emperor that:

የፊናንስ ሥራ ብዙ ማጥናትና ምርመራ የሚያስፈልግ ስለሆነ ዝርዝሩን ሁሉ ቁጭ ብሎ በማሰብ ሞልቶ ለመጻፍ የማይቻል ነው። ያንዱ ዓመት በጁ ከተሰራ በኋላ ብዙ ትምህርት ይገኛል። በተረፈ ለግርማዊ ንጉሠ ነገሥት አጥብቄ የማመለከተው ማናቸውም ሰው በደምብ ከቆመው ግብር ወይም ቀረጥ እንዳይማር ማድረግ አስፈላጊ ነው፤ በፊናንስ ደንብ ልዩ መብት ለማንም አይሰጥም።

⁵⁶⁰ Memorandum to establish Ministry of Finance in Ethiopia, Yilma Déréssa, Not Dated, Folder No. A2934-2957, ŚM, MOFED.

*For public finance obliges thorough study and investigation, it is difficult to jot down the details of it at once. Lesson can be taken from an experience of the first year budget. As a final point, I sincerely notify your Majesty the Emperor that it is necessary not to exempt **any one from legally endorsed tax**. In finance regulation, no one shall enjoy special privilege.⁵⁶¹ (emphasis mine)*

Interestingly enough, in the draft of this memo, the last sentence of the above quotation was originally written as “ማናቸውም ሰው ከግርማዊ ንጉሠ ነገሥት ጀምሮ በደምብ ከቆመው ግብር ወይም ቀረጥ እንዳይማር ማድረግ አስፈላጊ ነው” –“it is necessary not to exempt any one, **including His Majesty the Emperor**, from legally endorsed tax”(emphasis mine). Probably, out of self-censorship, Yīlma cancelled out these four words, still legible in the draft text.

Archival sources at the Ministry of Finance give clues about the initial tasks of Yīlma in his effort to organize the Ministry. Without the supervision or the assistance of a Vice-Minister and a Minister as no one was appointed to the position, Yīlma carried out the founding work acting as a high ranking government official in the Ministry. Until Yīlma was transferred to the Ministry of Trade and Industry in 1949, of course, no minister was appointed over him.⁵⁶²

Within a few weeks of his appointment as a Director General of the Ministry (21th September 1941), Yīlma formulated the powers, duties and responsibilities of the Ministry of Finance with particular emphasis to the very relations between an employee of the Ministry and the Governor-General of a province. When we compare this regulation with that of Articles (44-46) of Order No. 1 of 1943 which defined the powers and duties of the Ministries, we can notice how Yīlma's

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶² Sālāmōn Gäbrāmariam to Yīlma Déréssa, Hamle 6, 1962 E.C. Folder No. 1/1-y Personal File, MOFA; Margery Perham, *The Government of...* 200.

regulation explicitly addressed the probable political difficulty of tax collection in the provinces and districts.⁵⁶³

The regulation proposed by Yilma on 20th September, 1941 to the Emperor and was put into practice later on, most likely after the assent of the latter, begins with making a division between personnel of the Ministry into 'politically appointed officials' and 'administrative officials'. While the minister and the general director belonged to the former category, experts and employees below the position of the Director General including the General Secretary were classified under the later grouping. Politically appointed officials, unlike the administrative employees, would get fixed salary and retire without pension. Furthermore, based on the political decision, they would be transfer from one institution to the other. Despite their skills and knowledge in the sector, of course, according to Yilma's regulation, the administrative employees would not be engaged in the political decisions on public finance.⁵⁶⁴

Compared to the pre-Italian period, in Yilma's regulation, the tasks and responsibilities of the Ministry of Finance were expanded. For instance, it was entitled to collect every kind of revenue

⁵⁶³ As decisive as it was in the period, however, this institutional development has not gotten the attention it deserved in the existing literature. It seems that some researchs conducted so far take practically the year 1942 as a turning point for major developments in the post-Italian period. This is perhaps partly because of methodological limitation. Obviously, the official gazette of the Ethiopian government (*Negarit Gazeta*) and the document of the 1942 Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement are good source materials for studies on revenue and public finance in the post-Italian period. However, foreign and locally generated sources before the publication of the first issue of *Negarit* on 30th March, 1942 and the signing of the Agreement on 31st January, 1942, shed light on some decisive developments in the modernization of the country's economy. Clapham (1969), for example, in his major work on the Ethiopian government noted that "it is a well-established maxim of political administration that the way to a government's heart is through its treasury, and that the distribution of its cash provides as good a guide as any to the internal structure of its authority. It is therefore worth taking a fairly close look at the Ethiopian budgetary system, and especially at the authorization of government spending. Taxation, by contrast, is for our purposes a far less illuminating field, being for the most part a mere device for collecting funds to meet the government's expenses." *Nägarit Gazeta*, Order No. 1 of 1943. Christopher Clapham, 155. However, given the period, the commencement of the centralization and standardization of taxation through the Ministry of Finance unlike the pre-war period was a major development in the history of the Ethiopian state. In fact, one of the characteristic features of the Absolutist state is the introduction of national taxation. See Bahru, "Economic Origins..." 1984 and *A History of...* 201-209; Desalegn, 1988; Tsegaye, 1996.

⁵⁶⁴ Memorandum from Yilma Dêrêssa to Emperor Haile Sellasse, Mäskäräm 10, 1934 E.C., Folder No. A 2934-2957, ŠM, MOFED; Memorandum from Yilma Dêrêssa to the officials of the Ministry of Finance, Mägäbit 10, 1934., Folder No. A 2934-2957, ŠM, MOFED.

including government earnings which were previously managed by the Ministry of Commerce and Revenue. The Department of Custom Revenue (both at Addis Ababa and in the provincial towns) which had been under the Ministry of Commerce and Revenue till then was brought under the Ministry of Finance. Furthermore, according to the regulation, the drafting and putting into practice of every financial proclamation, decree, regulation and legal notice was the jurisdiction of the Ministry.⁵⁶⁵ Yīlma's strong argument that tax collection should be the exclusive right of the Ministry of Finance was already been made clear in the earlier memo he developed while he was in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The endorsement which dealt with the relation of an employee of the Ministry of Finance and the governor-general of a province or a governor of a district was the most important part of this regulation. It clearly stated that it was only the personnel of the Ministry of Finance, not a governor, who would collect state taxes and dues of any kind throughout the country. Yīlma laid emphatic stress upon this issue in his addendum prepared at the same moment.⁵⁶⁶ Furthermore, according to the regulation proposed by Yīlma, a Governor-General was not entitled to give orders to employee of the Ministry of Finance. The latter was made accountable only to the Ministry of Finance.⁵⁶⁷ Consequently, however dominant governors of provinces and districts had been in the social formation, their age-old power over taxation and revenue collection was reduced to a great extent. This is one of the momentous measures taken by the Imperial Government of Ethiopia towards fiscal centralization.

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Mahtāmā Sīlassé, *Zikīrā*....372-413.

⁵⁶⁶ “Bā’agārā Gāžina Bāgānzāb Ministēr Sārātāñoč mākakāl Bāmisāraw sīra Yāmiyagānañacāwīnina Yā mayagānañacāwīn Yāmiğālš kāgānzāb Ministēr Dānh Yātāqāda”, September 20, 1941, Folder No. A 2934-2957, ŠM, MOFED

⁵⁶⁷ Yīlma Déréssa to Emperor Hailā Sīlassé, Māskārām 10 1934 E.C., Folder No. A 2934-2957, ŠM, MOFED

Yet, the prominence and importance of Yīlma's regulation can be assessed within the context of the social formation in general and the political power that the governors of provinces, sub-provinces and districts were exercising in particular. Apparently, until the advent of central institutions at local stages in the 1940s, to echo Perry Anderson, there was an organic unity of economy and polity in a political system where the politico-legal coercion was exercised by landlords at the village level.⁵⁶⁸ Interestingly, after 1941 too, provincial administration remained the preserve of the traditional ruling group. Especially in the provinces of northern Ethiopia, the majority of men appointed to the post of sub-provincial (*awraḡa*) governor were natives of the province, and most often were members of noble families with a tradition of office-holding in that area.⁵⁶⁹ Thus, for a long period of time, tax collection and other politico-administrative responsibilities mainly fell within their feudal jurisdiction. It was in this historical situation that the regulation of October 1941 was put into practice.

Among other major legal announcements that were put in to practice within the six months of the establishment of the institution, the regulation of tithe (*asrat*), land tax proclamation, regulation of government property, and regulation of weapons are worth mentioning. At that very moment, of course there were some unfinished businesses such as proclamations on customs tariff, state monopoly over salt and proclamation of auditing.⁵⁷⁰

Of all the achievements of the new institution, Yīlma cherished the implementation of the land tax as a 'great achievement that would be a source of towering pride for the personnel of the Ministry'.⁵⁷¹ The proclamation was the decree of 3rd November, 1941 (Tiqimt 23, 1934 E.C.)

⁵⁶⁸ Anderson, 19.

⁵⁶⁹ Markakis, 292-294.

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷¹ Most likely, the note was prepared before January 15, 1942 as Colonel Stafford wrote a short communiqué to Yīlma on *Tir* 9, 1934 E.C. referring to this note. Even, it could be argued that this rough estimate

which was proclaimed before the launching of *Negarit Gazeta* in March 1942. This decree was announced on the 11th anniversary of the Emperor's coronation and the Emperor made a radio speech about it.⁵⁷²

Here, careful scrutiny of the archival and other published materials shows that the edict did serve as a major point of reference for the renowned 'Land Tax Proclamation of 1942'. As we can see from this legal announcement, the Emperor approved the Proclamation of March 1942 "in view of the proposal submitted to by experts who have studied the subject of land taxes and in view of our proclamation of Tekemt 23, 1934, on the advice of our Council of Ministers".⁵⁷³

Before the issue of land tax was discussed in the Council of Ministers, Yilma had presented a preliminary note to the Council. Most probably delivered in the form of speech,⁵⁷⁴ his note was an argumentative and persuasive piece in its form and content. He began his note/speech with the justification for government's intent in collecting land and other kinds of taxes. He then stressed the very responsibility of the Ministry of Finance not only in collecting taxes but also in enhancing the living standard of the people.⁵⁷⁵

was made before 28th December, 1941 for Yilma had presented a detailed estimate of revenue and expenditure with different figures from this one. A note by Yilma Déréssa to the Council of Ministers, Not dated, Folder No. A 2934-2957, *ŠM*, MOFED ;Shiferaw Bekele, 107.

⁵⁷² Gäbrä Wäld İngīda Wārḳ, *Yä'itīyopiya Märetīna Gībīr Šim*, (Addis Ababa, 1948), 80-81.

⁵⁷³ However, there are slight variations between these two proclamations. For instance, in the Land Tax No. 8, 1942, a landowner shall be deemed to have refused or willfully neglected to pay his tax, if after a period of three months when the same becomes due, the tax remained unpaid. But in the *Ṭiqimt* proclamation, the cut-off date was six months. *Negarit Gazeta*, No. 8 of 1942, A Proclamation to Provide to Provide a Tax on Land. 30th March, 1942.

⁵⁷⁴ In the note, Yilma addressed the discussant directly as 'Your Excellencies' now and again which is conventional mode of presentation in speeches.

⁵⁷⁵ Repeating what he had written to the Emperor before he was transferred from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in September, 1941, Yilma underlined the need to implement a careful revenue policy. However valuable for the government economic power, he wrote, some taxes were exploitative in their nature and they affected the livelihood of the masses severely. Consequently, this characteristic would impede the government from attaining its goals. Yilma also referred to taxes which would generate apparently much money yet they entailed an arduous task to collect. Conversely, though easy to collect, some taxes lacked element of fairness; as a result, they would disappoint and dishearten the masses. This, Yilma remarked, eventually would lead the government to fail in

Interestingly, Yilma also mentioned taxes that were not well-matched with the contemporary international financial ‘standard’ and, these would damage the diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and other governments. Emphasizing by way of summary what he had pointed out in the introduction part of his note, Yilma listed down four major rationales behind proclaiming the new taxation on Tiqimt 23, 1934. The justifications were meant to address major difficulties related to tax collection in Ethiopia prior to the 1940s.

The first dealt with problems due to different taxes which affected the livelihood of the mass exhausting its economic resources. Yilma noted also the psychological aspect of this problem emphasizing how the masses were suffering from tax fatigue as a result of its multiplicity.⁵⁷⁶ As “the state was run by land rather than by money”,⁵⁷⁷ undoubtedly, tax collection was a cumbersome engagement both for the tax payers and tax collectors.

If the kinds of taxes imposed on the mass were small in number, being the number of tax collectors smaller correspondingly, tax collection would be cost effective. This was Yilma’s second rationale for the proclamation of the land tax of November 1941. Thirdly, the multiplicity of taxes obliged the government to engage in the time consuming business of settling tax payers’ appeals for tax exemption. Therefore, Yilma argued, limiting the kinds of taxes to one or two would resolve the above-mentioned problem. He also underlined the need to an equitable tax system along the lines of, what he called, the “international financial standard”. Finally, the

fulfilling its aim and purpose. A note by Yilma Déréssa to the Council of Ministers, Not dated, Folder No. A 2934-2957, *ŠAM*, MOFED .

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁷ As explained by Shiferaw Bekele meticulously, however, *širit* is a relatively comprehensible concept in connection with land use, land ownership, or land rights in the Pre-Italian period. See Shiferaw, 78-83.

ultimate goal of the forth coming tax system, Yīlma concluded, was to enhance the living standard of the people, consequently, to be recognized in equal terms with the other kingdoms.⁵⁷⁸

Obviously, the Proclamation to Provide for a Tax on Land No. 8 of 1942 categorized land into three types and on each *Gašša* (80-100 acres), every land owner was liable to pay 15, 10 and 5 *bīrr* respectively for fertile(*lām*), semi-fertile(*lām-täf*) and poor(*täf*) lands.⁵⁷⁹ However, prior to the proclamation that endorsed the above-mentioned rate; the Council of Ministers had decided to sanction a different and a discounted rate of taxes: 12 *bīrr* for fertile, 7 *bīrr* for semi-fertile and 4 *bīrr* for poor land. To raise the possible low amount of revenue to be collected from this rate, a tax on cattle was proposed. However, Yīlma recalled in the note, as the proposed tax on cattle was deferred, the Council of Ministers came to a decision to raise the rate to the level as proclaimed in the Land Tax of Tekemt 23, 1934 (E.C) and March, 1942.⁵⁸⁰

Furthermore, Yīlma mentioned the issue of tax rate in those provinces where the land had not been divided into *gaššas*. In this regard, he drew the attention of the members of the Council to the apparently controversial phrase- “ቀድሞ ትገብረው የነበረውን እኩልታውን አስቀርቼልሃለሁ” (trans., “half the levy in force before 1935 is exempted”- in the Land Tax of Ṭiqīmt 23, 1934 E.C. and called upon them to offer their counsel. Regarding this, he referred to the misinterpretation of the proclamation as a decree that would excuse the masses living in those territories *half of the kinds of taxes* (emphasis added). In a short communiqué to F.E. Stafford annexed to a note, Yīlma listed down 24 sub-provinces, probably out of the 32 “territories” or “possessions”, identified as per the administrative division before the Italian invasion. To address

⁵⁷⁸ When Yīlma mentioned other kingdoms, he most likely referred to the western states especially the British Government.

⁵⁷⁹ *Negarit Gazeta*, A Proclamation to Provide for a Tax on Land No. 8 of 1942.

⁵⁸⁰ Yīlma Dérçssa to the Council of Ministers, Not dated. Folder No. A 2934-2957, ŠM, MOFED.

the problem of land measurement in these sub-provinces, he also asked for expert assistance from the British adviser.⁵⁸¹

Despite Yilma's and his subordinates' tenacious efforts to implement a revenue policy in a centralized way, the attempts to regularize the imposition and collection of government revenue had not met with great success. Generally speaking, Stafford noted, the revenue administration as conceived in the Ministry of Finance had endeavored to follow the spirit of the Proclamation of the government of November 2, 1941, but other Ministries persisted in controlling their own special revenues. For instance, the Ministry of Commerce taxed coffee, alcohol and building materials and the Ministry of Agriculture took them on forests, wood and the thermal springs. Toll gates existed across the country. The British financial advisor recommended that it is essential that the Ministry of Finance should be accepted by all as the sole keeper of the Government Treasury.⁵⁸²

Given the responsibilities of these ministerial institutions in the pre-Italian period, the disorders in their respective jurisdictions over revenue collection in 1941 and 1942 could be taken as a serious gap due to lack of definite legal framework. However, Yilma and other authorities at the Ministry were not passive spectators of this mix-up. For instance, in the instructions for the staff of the Ministry issued on 6th November, 1941, it is enacted that as tithes and market dues formerly collected by the Ministries of Agriculture and Commerce had been transferred to the

⁵⁸¹ These were "[Tigray], Gondär, Bägémüdär, Yägu, Wällo, Goğam, Dänkälé, Awsa, Čärčär, Balé, Ğimma, Wälläga, [Sidama], [Wällayta], Gamo, Kulo, Konta, Bako, Borāna, Käffa, Maji, [Benč], Gura Färda, Beni Šangul." A note by Yilma Déréssa to the Council of Ministers, Not dated, Folder No. A 2934-2957, *ŠM*, MOFED, On the eve of the Italian invasion Ethiopia was divided in to 32 "territories" or "possessions" (ግዛት, *gizāt*) of uneven and varying size, with the governors bearing different titles. The distinction between the provinces and sub-provinces was not always clear. Some of the administrative units in the north, such as Šimén, Bägémüdär, Tigré (Tigray) etc. retained old historical names, privileges and "much of their old historical and cultural identity". Joanna Mantel-Nieúko, "Modern concepts of administrative division, Administrative division," in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 1, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003)101a.

⁵⁸² Stafford to the Private Secretary to His Imperial Majesty, 19th October, 1942, IES, MS 3691, G-51.

Ministry of Finance they should summon the tithe and market staff and should explain to them that their department and their responsibilities henceforth belonged to the Ministry of Finance. They could draw up a nominal roll and transmit one copy to their superior official and one copy to the Ministry of Finance.⁵⁸³

Despite this and other legally forceful regulations, interestingly enough, a tendency of spending revenue under ones disposal instead of sending it to the Ministry of Finance as per the budget proclamations and the principle of public finance continued until the 1960s and it was one source of dispute before the Emperor between authorities from the Ministry of Finance (including Yīlma) and claimants over the revenue collected by institutions under their administration.⁵⁸⁴

Unlike the pre-occupation period when the responsibilities and activities of the Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Finance overlapped greatly as far as public finance is concerned, an order to define the powers and duties of ministers in January 1943 rectified this mix-up.⁵⁸⁵ The Ministry of Finance, therefore, was made responsible for the direction and execution of matters directly related to the concept of public finance encompassing both its revenue and expenditure aspects.⁵⁸⁶

Though the collection of land tax and tithe were in the progress in accordance with the law in the period between February 1942 and September 1942, there was no data for an estimate of revenue. The British adviser testified that proposals for the cattle tax, which was the parallel charge on the cattle owner to the tithe for the agriculturist, were accepted by the Ministry of Finance but rejected by the Council of Ministers.

⁵⁸³ Instructions for the Staff of the Ministry of Finance, 6th November, 1941, Folder No. A 2934-2957, *SM*, MOFED.

⁵⁸⁴ Informants: Bulēa Dāmāqsa and Ašānafī Šifāraw.

⁵⁸⁵ Mahtāmā Sīllassé Wāldä Mäsqāl, *Zikrā Nāgār*, 372-413.

⁵⁸⁶ *Negarit Gazeta*, Order No. 1 of 1943, 29th January, 1943.

‘The Customs Houses at Dire Dawa and Ġiġiġa were still in the hands of the Military Authorities and the collection of duty on the Sudan border, where the Sudan Government was no longer acting on behalf of [the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration] , had yet to be organized.’⁵⁸⁷ Whereas, as early as December, 1941, a confidential circular was sent to all senior British political officers and heads of department which clearly stated that, as soon as the agreement was signed, the Ethiopian Government would become an independent financial entity and the financial assistance would be in the nature of a grant in aid of a fixed amount. From the date of the agreement, therefore, the cost of all governmental services in Ethiopia would be met from funds to be provided by the Ethiopian Treasury and not by the funds of the British Administration.’ Here, at least to the discussion at hand, more important than the instruction on matters of expenditure in the circular was the directive on the question of revenue. The deputy chief wrote plainly that ‘the collection of any form of Government revenue by British officers would cease.’⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸⁷ Stafford to the Private Secretary to His Imperial Majesty, 19th October, 1942, IES, MS 3691, G-51.

⁵⁸⁸ According to the circular, “expenses to be met from the O.E.T.A. funds would be confined solely to paying for goods and services for British Military and political purposes, custodianship of enemy property and the evacuation of the Italians. This precludes, the deputy chief elaborated, payment from our funds for those governmental and civil services which are at present financed in this way, such as expenditure on municipalities, hospitals, raids, buildings(save for offices and residences required for our own purposes) and the provision of free facilities in the way of petrol, transport and other semi-military services. He also warned the British officers, on the receipt of this letter, to review all recurrent payments being made by them on Administration account with a view to stopping those which will no longer be British responsibility as speedily as may be after the signature of the agreement, and, if desirable, at once. Where it is desirable in the interest of the Ethiopian Government that the services should continue [British senior political officers and heads of departments] should address a formal notification to the proper Ethiopian authority (or in Addis Ababa the British Adviser to the Department if such exists) that the payments now being made by the British officers would cease as soon as the agreement becomes effective. Any individuals concerned should be given notice by the officers that they would make no payments after the agreement had been signed. The police force, however, would continue to be financed and controlled as it was. Confidential Letter from Deputy Chief of Political Officer to all senior political officers and heads of departments.” Dated 27th December, 1941, IES MS 3691,G-51.

4.2. Establishment of the Finance Bureaucracy

In a while too, Yilma engaged actively in recruiting personnel for the Ministry of Finance based on Stafford's sketch of organizational structure annexed in his letter.⁵⁸⁹ Here, few words on the organizational structure and its architect (F.E Stafford) is in order before I discuss how Yilma together with others, tackled the obstacles with regard to the trained man power in the Ministry.

The organizational structure of the Ministry was formed most likely before October 1941 as documents at the Ministry mentioned such hierarchical composition of personnel in the list prepared for pay roll in the middle of that month. Without the office of the Minister, the Director General occupied the highest position in the Ministry. Below this office, there were five major Departments excluding the Archive (Record Office) and these were the Department of General Secretariat (led by *Ato* Wäldä Sillassé Zälälé), Department of Customs and Market (Zékarias Täklé), Department of Taxation and Excise (Taddässä Yaqob), Department of Finance (again Wäldä Sillassé Zälälé), Department of Treasury (Gäbrä Mariam Amänté who was the paternal uncle of Yilma Deressa), and Record Office (Däbäbä Tsämīru). In October 1941, there were about 37 employees including Yilma Déréssa at the head office of the Ministry of Finance.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁹ The British adviser reminded Yilma in this memo that he had shown him the organizational chart so far. The letter gives a clue that there was a discussion between them on the tasks and activities of the personnel in the directorates and subsections below them. F.E. Stafford to Yilma Déréssa, 18th September, 1941, IES, MS 3691, G-51.

⁵⁹⁰ In the Office of the Director-General, there were five employees and these were Yilma Déréssa, Abära Amarä, Täfära Lisanä Wärq (two of these were “የፖስታ ጽሑፍ” ‘secret letter clerks’), Petros and Gähad Gäbrä Kīrstos (clerks for English language). In the General Secretariat there were three workers including the head of the department Wäldä Sillassé Zälälé. Both Täfära Goshu and Gäbrä Giyorgis Yosef were clerks for financial orders. Apart from Zäkarias Tekle, the head of the Department of Costumes and Market Revenue, there were three workers namely Dästa Roro (controller, a relative of Yilma Déréssa), Nadäw Dämära (Finance officer) and Sīyoum Gäbrä Sillassé (clerk). In the Department of Taxation and Excise, Taddässä Yaqob, the head, was accompanied by only one employee, Zäläqä Bälaynäh who was working in a section dealing with State Land (*Yämāngīst Rīst*). The chief treasurer in the Department of Treasury was, Gäbrä Mariam Amänté, and there were seven clerks, cashiers and bookkeepers under him: Wäldä Amanuel Māngīstu, Bäqälä Abära, Täfära Täklä Mariam, Lakä Täsfä, Wäldä Sillassé Gäbrä Mariam, Gäbrä Mika’el Wäldäyās and Täfära Ašagrē. Yosef Asbä, Mähari Līmanu [Līsanu?], Taddässä Wäldä Gäbrī’el were working in the Department of Finance (Budget and Chancellery). The Record office had two employees, Däbäbä Tsämīru and Bäqälä Kassa (clerk). Supervised by Hailé Dästa, their chief, there were

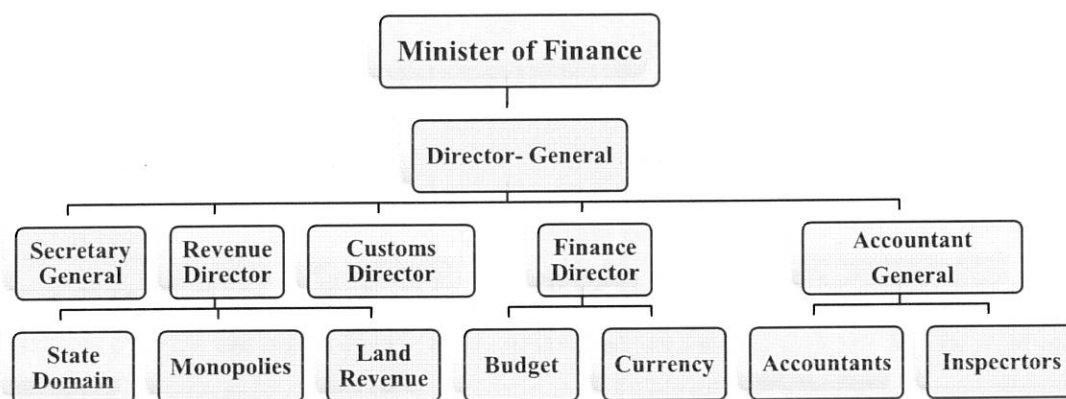


Chart 1: Oraganizationa Structure of the Ministry of Finance in 1940s.⁵⁹¹

Understandably, this organizational structure of the Ministry is different from its structure in mid-1960s when the Ministry “administered 5, 324 employees stationed in the provinces and in Addis Ababa as well as 2, 027 Finance Guards who protected the various offices attached to the Ministry, and are paid by the Minister of Finance.”⁵⁹² It is important to point out here that the first finance police (‘guards’) were recruited among patriots under *Fitawrari* Šäwa Īrkabih and *Fitawrari* Yilma Bäšah as per the request of Yilma to the Emperor.⁵⁹³

Included neither in the organizational structure of the Ministry nor in the official pay roll, nonetheless, the office of the Financial Adviser was an imposing unit of institution while it utilized the same imperial logo on its letter heads yet without official stamp of any kind.⁵⁹⁴

Initially, Brigadier Sandford proposed some 7 British advisers, to be assigned at the Ministry of

five other office messengers namely, Mamo Kasa(deceased at the time of the compilation of the report), Kābādä Tulu, Takälä Wäldä Mariam, Abatä Laqāw and Tola Wällé. Five employers, previously working in the head office and transferred to the Šäwa province finance office, were Täsäma Bäšah, Bäfiqadu Wäldä Mäsqäl, Admasu Gizaw, Mäkonniñ Täsäma and Ayälä Dästa. Yilma Déréssa to Gäbrä Mariam Amänté, Dated Tiqmüt, 14, 1934, Folder No. B-2314, TGB, MOFED.

⁵⁹¹ IES, MS 3691,G-5

⁵⁹² Schwab,118.

⁵⁹³, Family Appeal to PMAC.

⁵⁹⁴ At the early period, however, as blank official letters were not published with headers and footers, they were only mimeographs and did not hold logo or seal. See Memorandum from Financial Adviser to Director General of Finance, 9th January, 1943, Folder No. B-2632-2683, ŠM, MOFED.

Finance.⁵⁹⁵ Sources are silent on the response of the Ethiopian Government. In August 1943, however, there were eight workers, three Ethiopians and five expatriates (four of them were clerks), in the financial advisor's office including Stafford, the chief adviser.⁵⁹⁶

Frank Stafford had been sending letters, circulars and memorandums with annexed charts and sample formats of financial documents most often to Yilma Déréssa that dealt with major issues related to the establishment of the Ministry including the organizational structure itself. With regard to this, it is important to emphasize the vital role advisers played especially in the financial field. With the consultation of the Emperor and Yilma Déréssa, they drew up some taxation regulations, devised accounting procedures, and prepared the detailed comparisons of income and expenditure on which the annual Budget was based.⁵⁹⁷ Unlike other British officers in the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration, Yilma seems to have had high regard for Colonel Stafford.⁵⁹⁸

As Yilma and other Ethiopian employees of the Ministry were working with British staff, "the language difficulty seems to have been a drag upon progress as... the detailed proposals and schemes prepared had perforced to be drafted in English and translated into Amharic, and vice versa. Delay was occasioned by the necessity of translating all documents."⁵⁹⁹ As the British advisers could not speak Amharic and most of the Ethiopians could not speak English, "the proceedings were made more difficult by the [shortage] of interpreters, especially [so] few of the required standard were available."⁶⁰⁰ At this very juncture, it is noteworthy to underscore

⁵⁹⁵ Confidential Note by Chief Political Officer on the Discussion on the Question of the number of Advisers, Dated 6th January, 1942, IES. MS. 3691, G-51.

⁵⁹⁶ F.E. Stafford to Josef Assistant Chief Treasurer, 30th August, 1943, Folder No. C.2380, TGB, MOFED.

⁵⁹⁷ Clapham, 105.

⁵⁹⁸ Family Appeal to PMAC.

⁵⁹⁹ Stafford to the Private Secretary to His Imperial Majesty, 19th October, 1942, IES, MS 3691, G-51.

⁶⁰⁰ Perham, *The Government of...*, 200.

that Yilma himself translated some of the regulations of the Ministry of Finance. Therefore, translation of legal documents from English to Amharic was one of Yilma's activities in the earlier period.⁶⁰¹

Returning, then, to Yilma's undertaking in building up the embryonic institution, sources testify, he played an important role in enlisting, recruiting and bringing together the first personnel of the Ministry in September 1941.⁶⁰² He first identified some nine prospective recruits for various responsibilities in the Ministry most likely before the end of September.⁶⁰³ Here, oral testimony does accord with what documents from archives of the Ministry elucidate. For instance, an informant recalled that he was transferred from his prior responsibility at the Ministry of Interior in Harärgé to the Ministry of Finance by the recommendation of Yilma Déréssa.⁶⁰⁴

Later on, Yilma, together with Wäldä Sillassé and Zäkarias, veterans of the Ministry since the pre-war period, recruited clerks, cashiers, treasurers and accountants. Nägadräs Gäbrä Egziabher, the then Minister of Trade and Industry, also recommended some experienced employees for the Ministry.⁶⁰⁵ Before the heads of departments took their position, however, Yilma had to request the emperor for his approval. Soon after, he also arranged for an occasion on which Hailä Sillassé would speak to.⁶⁰⁶ In March 1942, Yilma sent the list of eighteen officials mostly chief provincial treasurers of the Ministry to the Minister of Pen as per the verbal order of the

⁶⁰¹ The Budget Guideline and the Customs Tariff Regulation are just two examples.

⁶⁰² In his memorandum that was sent to the Emperor Yilma listed down the names of employers. Memorandum from Yilma Déréssa to Emperor Hailä Sillassé, Not dated, September, 1941, Folder No. A 2934-2957, *ŠM*, MOFED; Informant: Mīnasé Lämman.

⁶⁰³ The list of candidates listed down in Yilma's note includes Taddässa Yaqob, Bäffiqadu Wäldä Mikael, Zäkarias Täklé, Solomon, Kābādä Mikael, Sībhatu Gäbré, Gäbrä Īgziabhēr Gäbru, Nadāw Dāmāra and Tāfāra Līsanā Wārq. Though not dated, one can infer from the draft note that the note was prepared before the recruitment of personnel most likely in September 1941 as the draft note referred to issues at their planning stage and were accomplished later in the subsequent weeks and months. See, Folder No. A 2934-2957, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁶⁰⁴ Informant: Mīnasé Lämman.

⁶⁰⁵ Yilma Déréssa to Emperor Hailä Sillassé, Tīqīmt 5, 1934 E.C., Folder No. A 2934-2957, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁶⁰⁶ Yilma Déréssa to Emperor Hailä Sillassé, Not dated, Maskeram 1934 E.C., Folder No. A 2934-2957, *ŠM*, MOFED.

Emperor. The then Chief Treasurer of the Ministry in Wällo province, Asfäha Wäldä Mika'el, was included in the list.⁶⁰⁷ Of course, provincial treasuries were to some degree organized and staffed before the Agreement was signed. "The functions of the staff were to collect, safeguard and account for to the Ministry of Finance all government revenue, and only to pay out sums under proper authority."⁶⁰⁸ In July 1942, Yilma also made finance personnel ready for toll-stations at Adigrat, Adwa, Bati, Moyalé, Mändi, Gälabat, Gambela, Dire Dawa and Addis Ababa. The staffs, Yilma assured, were clued-up about the regulation of customs tariff.⁶⁰⁹

Besides, for the head office at Addis Ababa, Yilma had to recruit cashiers, clerks, treasurers and accountants for branch offices of the Ministry of Finance in 12 provinces. In his effort to address the problem due to the shortage of trained man power, Yilma first proposed both to the emperor and the British financial adviser in October 1941 to open a school and send these people for short term training. After the preparation of a syllabus and the recruitment of teachers, Yilma personally selected the candidates mainly based on their language skills in English and French.⁶¹⁰

⁶⁰⁷ According to Bairu Tafla, "the Eritrean politician and administrator Asfaha Walda Mikael was once a government official in Wällo Province in the 1940s. Therefore, it is likely that the chief treasurer in the province was the same Asfäha." Bairu Tafla, "Asfäha Wäldä Mika'el," in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 1, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003), 368. Yilma wrote this letter to Šāhafé Tr'zaz Wäldä Giorgis after the receipt of the Emperor's order. Other officials in the list were *Ato* Wäldä Sillassé Zälälé, Secretary General of the Ministry of Finance; *Ato* Gäbrä Mariam Amänté, Chief Treasurer of the Ministry; *Ato* Tadäsä Yaqob, Director of Finance; *Ato* Zäkarias Täklé, Director of Customs; *Ato* Bäfiqadu Wäldä Mika'el, Director of State Property; *Ato* Mäkonin Kiflé, Director of Revenue; *Ato* Hagos Tawäldä Mädihiin, Director of Tax and Due; *Nägadras* Bahru Nicola, Chief Controller; *Ato* Wäldä Bärhan Täkilä Haymanot, Chief Treasurer of the Ministry in Härär Province; Captain Aklilu Dadi, Chief Treasurer in Sawa Province; *Nägadras* Abaynäh Wäldä Mika'el, Chief Treasurer in Bägémidir Province; *Nägadras* Mäšäša Gäbrämaria, Chief Treasurer in Wälläga; *Ato* Wäldä Sibat Täsäma, Chief Treasurer in Jimma; *Ato* Gäbrä Kirsos Wäldä Rufa'el, Chief Treasurer in Sidamo; Qānazmač Yohanis Bitäwiliñ, Chief Treasurer in Tigre; *Ato* Agonafir Wäldä Sillassé, Chief Treasurer in Gamu Goffa; *Ato* Bäfiqadu Wäldä Mäsqäl, Chief Treasurer in Arusi. Yilma Déréssa to the Ministry of Pen, Mägabit 4, 1935 E.C, Folder No. A 5377-5446, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁶⁰⁸ Stafford to Private Secretary to His Imperial Majesty, Report on the Ministry of Finance (1st February, 1942-30th September, 1942), 19th October, 1942, IES, MS 3691, G-51.

⁶⁰⁹ "Yä'Gänzäb Ministér Liqäbäl Yämigäbaw gäbiwočēna Yädäräsäbätin Akuahon yämiyasräda zürür" A Report of the Ministry of Finance, Hamle 11, 1934 E.C., Folder No. A 2934-2957, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁶¹⁰ It is interesting to mention here that in the memorandum of Yilma Déréssa, to some of his requests, the emperor seems to have written short instructions, comments and questions using a red pencil cryon. Täklä Šadiq Mäkuria referred in his memoir to the same kind of pencil in the hands of the Emperor in 1945. *Yähñywät Tariké*.... 130

With more than 40 trainees,⁶¹¹ the short term training in accounting was inaugurated in Mīnilik II School at the end of October 1941 under the auspices of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts.⁶¹² After completion of their training, almost all the graduates of October 1942 were sent to the provinces. The training seems to have taken some two to four months and among the 31 graduates of October 1942, 29 were sent to the provinces.⁶¹³ In his relentless effort to strengthen the newly established institution, Yīlma became also instrumental in the preparation of seals, the printing of authorized headed papers, and the administration of the pre-war archive of the Ministry of Finance.⁶¹⁴ As early as September 1941, too Yīlma oversaw the construction of the building of the main treasury. Because the construction of a room in which the treasure chest was located and the work of the chest itself were not completed due to shortage of building materials in the market, Yīlma explained to the Emperor, he couldn't authorize the transfer of revenue from government departments to the Ministry of Finance. With regard to this, he also invited the Emperor to take a look at the design of the treasury house.⁶¹⁵ By mid November 1941, according to Yīlma's report, the Ministry was made in full control of Mārha Ṭībāb printing house which was publishing financial documents for administrative and transaction purposes.⁶¹⁶

⁶¹¹ In a British document, the number of students was 50 when the Anglo-Ethiopian agreement was signed. Report on the Ministry of Finance (1st February, 1942-30th September, 1942) from Stafford to Private Secretary to His Imperial Majesty, Dated 19th, October, 1942, IES, MS 3691, G-51.

⁶¹² Director of the Ministry of Education and Arts to the Minister of Finance, Ṭiqīmīt 26, 1935 E.C., Folder No. A-5377-5446, *ŠM*, MOFED; Yilma Deressa to Emperor Hailä Sillassé, Hidar, 6, 1934 E.C., Folder No. A-2934-2957, *ŠM*, MOFED

⁶¹³ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁴ Yīlma Déréssa to Emperor Hailä-Sillassé, Dated, Hidar 6, 1934, Folder No., A 2934-2957, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁶¹⁵ This document was written most probably when Yilma was about to submit his Memorandum on the powers and duties of the Ministry of Finance on September 20, 1941. Yilma Deressa to Emperor Hailä-Sillassé, Not Dated, Folder No., A 2934-2957, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁶¹⁶ Mārha Ṭībāb Printing House was founded in 1921 by *Ras* Täfäri Mäkönnin in Addis Abāba. Its original name was 'The Printing Press of the Heir to the Throne of Ethiopia His Highness *Ras* Täfäri Mäkönnin'. Later on it became 'Bīrhannina Sālam Printing House' named after the news paper published there under the auspices of *Ras*

Proud of what he and his subordinates accomplished in the very formative years of the Ministry of Finance, Yilma remarked in March 1942 that the institution inherited little or nothing from the previous financial institutions. The undertaking of pre-war Ethiopian Ministry of Finance, according to him, was confined only to the task of treasury.⁶¹⁷ Indeed, the regulation on the duties and responsibilities of the Ministry of Finance, issued by Emperor Mīnilik II, supports Yilma's remark.⁶¹⁸ All in all, the undertaking of a Ministry was impossible without national taxation and national currency.

During the period of Italian rule too, Yilma argued, what was carried out in Ethiopia in the sector was nothing but an extension of the Public Finance of Rome. Firstly, Yilma argued that issued in Italy for the Italian economy, the Italian currency (*Lire*) was paid out to cover the cost of military and political activities in Ethiopia.. Secondly, the statute of taxation and expenditure was planned to make effectual only for Italian citizens.⁶¹⁹ Like Yilma, Stafford also believed that "the work of reconstruction and reform after the eviction of Italians has had to begin ...with little useful precedent to guide it, and few persons with training or aptitude available to assist."⁶²⁰

4.3. Yilma's Initiative for a New Ethiopian Currency

Though Emperor Mīnilik II introduced a national currency at least nominally at the very end of the 19th century which bore the sovereign's effigy, the currency was only moderately

Tāfāri. Märs'e Hazān Wāldā Qirqos, *Yä'hayañaw*..., 240-241, 276-277. Hanna Rubinkowska, "Bīrhaninna Sālam," in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 1 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003), 537a.

⁶¹⁷ Yilma Déréssa to the officials of the Ministry of Finance, Dated Megabit 10, 1934 E.C., Folder No. A 2934-2957, ŠM, MOFED.

⁶¹⁸ Mahtāmā Sīllassé, *Zikīrā Nāgār*, 194-198.

⁶¹⁹ Yilma Déréssa to the officials of the Ministry of Finance, Dated Megabit 10, 1934 E.C., Folder No. A 2934-2957, ŠM, MOFED.

⁶²⁰ Stafford to the Private Secretary to His Imperial Majesty, 19th October, 1942, IES, MS 3691, G-51.

successful.⁶²¹ It is noted that “the real intention behind the making and issuance of this currency seems to have been political rather than economic; a national legal tender was among the conditions that bestowed recognition by and admission to the club of modern independent states, a status that was intensively sought by the Emperor.”⁶²²

In the course of the liberation campaign in 1940 and 1941, the issue of legal tender seems to have been one of the top priorities of both Emperor Hailä Sillassé and the British authorities since mid-February 1941.⁶²³ For instance, concerning the currency question, as early as February 1941, General Wavell, envisaged a short term policy and long term policy: the first during the campaign and the second when the operations were more or less completed. While the Gideon force was camped at Buré, for instance, the Emperor, Brigadier Sandford and another British officer T.R. Blachley held successive discussions on 26th and 27th March 1941 about, among other things, finance and currency.⁶²⁴ During the liberation campaign, the British officials, most probably with consultation of the Emperor, planned to outlaw the Italian Lire in Ethiopia.⁶²⁵ Since then, Ethiopia seems to have entered into the “chaotic monetary situation”.⁶²⁶ Until the Ethiopian Government finalized all the ground work for the Ethiopian

⁶²¹ Richard Pankhurst, *An Economic...*, 481-484.

⁶²² Befekadu Degefe, “The Making of...”: 23.

⁶²³ Letter from War Office, Currency in Ethiopia and Occupied Italian Colonies, IES, MS 2110.

⁶²⁴ It is important to refer to the discussion between the Emperor and the British Officials at Buré about the manners in which the Proclamations (Emperor's) including regarding currency and financial matters and Public Notices (British Officials) should be handled during the liberation campaign. Blachley pointed out that “where any public pronouncement was to be made the Emperor would like the Amharic version produced as *Awag*, and published simultaneously with the public notices which would appear over signature of the Deputy Chief Political Officer (D.C.P.O). The latter would be published in English and Italian only.” Note by T.R. Blachley, “Emperor Situation Regarding Proclamations and Public Notices”, 3rd, April 1941, IES, MS 3691, G-51; Draft Proclamation No.2, Currency, Not Dated, IES, MS 3691, G-51.

⁶²⁵ T.R. Blachley to Brigadier D.A. Sandford, Dated April 4, 1941, IES, MS. 3691, G-51.

⁶²⁶ Befekadu, “The Development of...”, 246.

currency to be released in May 1945, the British authorities were determined to include Ethiopia in its currency zone.⁶²⁷

National Currency and State Bank, nonetheless, had an indigenous impetus. This initiative to introduce one's own currency and to establish a central bank, I argue, was one of the major undertakings that ushered modernity in financial institutions in Ethiopia. Yīlma and the Emperor seem to have made a discussion on the importance of currency and the need to establish an Ethiopian Bank before the negotiation between the Ethiopian and the British authorities on the question of currency was initiated. Yīlma, commanded by his Imperial Majesty, developed a memorandum before September 1941 and advised that:

ዛሬ የኢትዮጵያ ሕዝብ የሚገባበት በጣሊያን የወረቀትና የታተመ ገንዘቦች ነው። ጣሊያኖች በማስገደድ የኢትዮጵያን ሕዝብ የወረቀትና የምንዛሪ ገንዘብ መቀበል አስተምረውታል። ስለዚህ ሕዝቡ ይህን ልምድ እንደጥንት ልማዱ ረስቶ አሁን ወደአገር ውስጥ በመፍሰስ ባለው በማሪያ ቴሬሲያ ብር መገባደጥን እንደገና ሳይጀምር የኢትዮጵያን ባንክ ከፍቶ የኢትዮጵያን የገንዘብ ወረቀትና የምንዛሪ ገንዘብ አትሞ ባዋጅ እንዲገባበት ቢያደርግ መንግስቱን ከዛሬው ችግሩ ያወጣዋል። ባንኩን ለመክፈት ግን የወርቅ ወይም የብር ርዕሰ ሥራ ስለሌለ፡፡ ይህንም ገንዘብ የኢትዮጵያ መንግስት ለመበደር የሚችል ይመስለኛል። ይልቁንም ገንዘቡ ርዕሰ ሥራ ባንክ የሚቀመጥ በመሆኑ የእንግሊዝ መንግስት ለማበደር ፈቃዱ ይመስለኛል። ደግሞም የኢጣሊያ መንግስት ከኢትዮጵያ ባንክ ወስዶ ወደውጭ አገር የላከው ሂ ወይም ቼ ሚሊዮን ሊሬ የሚሆን ገንዘብ አለና ለብድሩ ወደፊት በሚከፈለው ገንዘብ ውስጥ ሊታሰብ ይችላል።

ፊናንሳቸው የታመነ ታላላቆች የአለም መንግስቶች ለሚያትሙት የወረቀትና የምንዛሪ ገንዘቦች በመቶ ፵፫ ርዕሰ ሥራ ያስቀመጣሉ። ለምሳሌ ባንክ ኦፍ እንግላንድ የሚያስቀምጠው ርዕሰ ሥራ ይህንኑ ያህል ነው። የኢትዮጵያ ፊናንስ ግን በጅምር ላይ ስለሆነ በመቶ ፶ ርዕሰ ሥራ ቢያስቀምጥ እንኳን ለጊዜው እጁን የሚያፍታታለት መስሪያ ገንዘብ ሳይገኝ አይቀርም። ስለዚህ ሥራና በዚሁ ማስታወሻ ውስጥ ስለሚገኙትም ስለሌሎች ጉዳዮች የኢትዮጵያን ባንክ በቅርቡ መክፈት አስፈላጊ መስሎ ይታያል። ባንኩን

⁶²⁷ *Ibid.*, 246.

ለመክፈት የሚያስፈልገው ንግግር ቦቶሉ እንዲደረግ አጥብቄ አስታውሳለሁ፡፡

Today, the Ethiopian people use the Italian paper money and minted coins for transactions. The Italians taught the people forcefully to utilize the currency. Therefore, if the Ethiopian government lets the people to make use of new currency before they, forgetful of paper money with the inflowing Maria Theresa Dollar, revert to their age-old habit, the state shall be spared from the problem that confronted it currently. But, the establishment of this bank obliges the government to deposit gold or silver as a reserve. I suppose that the Ethiopian government can be borrowed the amount of money equivalent to the reserve from the British government. Seeing that this money shall be deposited in the Bank, I think, the British government shall be willing to lend it. Furthermore, as there have been 50 or 60 million lira that the Italian government took from Ethiopia and transferred to overseas, this money could cover part of payout for the debt.

*Powerful Governments of the world with stable financial condition deposit a reserve that amounts to 33% of the total money they issue. For instance, the reserve of the Bank of England is equal to this percentage. As emergent as the Ethiopian finance has been, even a 50% reserve enables the government to spend money at least on its basic activities. For this and other undertakings mentioned in this memorandum, I think it is necessary to establish the Bank of Ethiopia in a short time. I insist the immediate commencement of discussion on the establishment of the Bank.*⁶²⁸

The Emperor and Yilma Déréssa, as the above long yet crucial quotation clearly shows, had at least the idea of launching a new bank and currency as soon as possible. Yilma's suggestion reveals that, except for the plan to borrow, there was a sense of urgency on the issue of national bank and currency even before the establishment of the Ministry of Finance in September 1941. However, this aspiration came to full reality through strain and struggle.

The British authorities had also felt a sense of urgency on the currency issue. "Among the first laws enacted by the British Military in April 1941 was the definition of legal tender currencies

⁶²⁸ Yilma Déréssa to Emperor Hailä Sillassé, Not Dated, Folder No. A2934-2957, ŠM, MOFED.

comprised Maria Theresa dollar, the East African Shilling, the Egyptian pound and the Indian Rupee.”⁶²⁹ However, the imminent shortage of decimal coins which were said to be in great demand by the poorer classes in the market obliged the British to reconsider the utilization of even Italian notes of small values. The decree, therefore, proclaimed that “in order that trade may not be impeded by the shortage of small change in Ethiopia until change for dollars was minted, permission was given for Italian notes and coinage of 10 lira denominations and under to be used.”⁶³⁰ In order to manage the financial and the currency situation in Ethiopia mainly in the way the British needed, “the Barclay’s Bank (Dominion, Colonial and Overseas) was invited by the British Government ‘to open a branch in Addis Ababa to facilitate financial arrangements for the (British) Military forces by providing banking services and serving as a medium for the introduction of a currency’. Barclays was in business from July 1, 1941 to April 15, 1943.”⁶³¹ As Ethiopian authorities, including Yīlma Déréssa had their plan and conviction on the need to commence a national currency, the monetary problem remained unsolved in the coming few years. Accordingly, this “chaotic and confused monetary environment engendered by the multiplicity of foreign currencies needed clearing up, and attempts at doing so started immediately. However, there was divergence between the British and Ethiopian plans on method and approach.”⁶³²

The British Currency plan was prepared at an interdepartmental meeting in which the Treasury, the War and Foreign Offices were represented on 2 January 1942.⁶³³ “The finalized currency

⁶²⁹ Befekadu Degefe, “The Development of” 235.

⁶³⁰ Draft Proclamation No.2, Currency, Not Dated, IES, MS 3691, G-51.

⁶³¹ Befekadu, “The Development of...” 235.

⁶³² Befekadu Degefe, “The Making of...”: 24.

⁶³³ The note of May 1, 1941 on Currency Plan for Ethiopia, prepared by Rowe-Dutton, stated that “the Maria Theresa Dollar suffered from the great defect that it was practically a fixed weight of silver, and its value varied with the price of silver. Stressing the need to have a new medium of exchange especially for the external trade, the writer suggested that the external link should be sterling leaving the MTD to be used for internal purposes.

plan was dispatched to Addis for ratification by the Ethiopian Government in April 1942.”⁶³⁴ According to Befekadu, the new currency would be called the ‘Ethiopian Pound’ and “would be in parity with the Pound Sterling, with millesimal subsidiary coins of which the principal would be a silver shilling. With major responsibilities such as manufacturing and management of the currency, a currency board would sit in London and would be made up of the Ethiopian Ambassador and two Britons.”⁶³⁵ To the disappointment of British officials behind the plan, Ethiopian authorities, including Yilma, declined to accept the British scheme:

*On receipt of the Currency Plan, the Ethiopian government expressed its disappointment with respect to the reserve fund to back the currency as well as the seat and composition of the Board to which effect the Director of Finance, Lij Yilma Deressa was directed to write letters to Lord Rennel in Nairobi and Colonel Stafford, the British Financial Advisor to the Emperor. Both letters made references to the conversation the Emperor had with Lord Rennel and the latter's promise to help make available the backing i.e. the reserve fund for the new currency from British sources as well as help to bring about an acceptable arrangement about the thorny issues of the composition and seating of the Board. In addition, the letter to Stafford indicated the Emperor's agreement to the plan, provided the reserve was to be supplied by the British government, and included a strong suggestion to have the coins minted locally as soon as possible and to introduce the notes later.*⁶³⁶

“The only other possibility,” according to Rowe-Dutton, “would be the dollar, but since there was no trade between Abyssinia and dollar-using countries, this would be unsuitable. To justify this point, the writer added that trade would be much more directed to countries based on sterling (Egypt, The Sudan, Kenya, India, Palestine and Iraq) and presumably with Italian colonies, the currency future of which was quite uncertain. It was suggested that the mechanism should be a Currency Board working in London, issuing notes against sterling, the original sterling fund no doubt being provided by a loan to the new Ethiopian Government. The management should be in the hands of U.K. nominees, in association with the Emperor’s Financial Advisor. The unit which Rowe-Dutton called a ‘Negus’ for convenience should be in the neighborhood of 1 with a subsidiary silver coin 500 fine 1/20th of its value; perhaps also 1/40th; and bronze coin 1/1000th of a Negus, in denominations of 1,2,5, and 10 mils, the silver coin being thus 25 and 50 mile. There could be 250 and 500 notes, and of course, larger ‘Negus’ notes. Rowe emphasized that there should be no fixed relationship between the “Negus” and the MT dollar save that, to assure an absolutely smooth transition, the “Negus” should be given a permanent sterling value of x-times the official rate for MT dollar when the scheme would begin. Rowe hoped that x should be 10.” A Note on Ethiopian Currency by Rowe-Dutton, Dated May 1, 1941, IES,MS, 2104. See also Befekadu Degefe, “The Making of...” 1993, 25-26.

⁶³⁴ Befekadu, “The Development of” 275.

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*, 243-244.

⁶³⁶ Befekadu, “The Making of ...”: 27-28.

Ethiopia's rejection of the British currency plan was based on, and derived from, sound economic thinking.⁶³⁷ It gave its reaction on the questions of a place where the 'Currency Board' should sit, the source of finance for the issuing of the currency, the gradual shift of reserve from sterling to gold, prolong the utilization of MTD until the new currency drives it out of circulation, partake the Ethiopian government in a decision and the nomenclature of the monetary unit.⁶³⁸

Yīlma Déréssa was one of the Ethiopian authorities who attempted to disprove the politically driven currency proposal of British authorities based on, as expected, his expertise in economics.⁶³⁹ Yīlma's stand on the currency issue consisted of three points and his suggestions seem to have served as a major input for Ethiopia's plan. Firstly, Yīlma refuted British proposition to make London the seat of the 'Currency Board' by pointing out its impracticality in addressing closely the very plausible challenges of inflation and deflation in the country's economy through fiscal policy. Obviously, a 'Currency Board' that would make its sit at Addis Ababa would be much more effective in engaging in money supply in line with the performance of the country's economy than a Board that would make its office in London. He also referred to the communication problems that would confront a Board at London due to the considerable distance between the two countries. On top of this, Yīlma argued, the ongoing the Second World War would exacerbate this problem.⁶⁴⁰

Secondly, Yīlma emphasized the political implication of the minting of indigenous legal tender with the effigy of Emperor Hailä Sīllassé in it. Besides its implication for Ethiopia's sovereign status, Yīlma added, the issue of national currency especially its smaller denominations had

⁶³⁷ Befekadu, "The Development of ...," 245, 246 and 267.

⁶³⁸ Befekadu, "The Making of ...": 28-29.

⁶³⁹ "Sīla Kārānsi Guday", Folder No. 15.08.16, NALA.

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

economic utility. Finally, he explained the apparent difficulties that Ethiopia would face as a result of the British control of Ethiopian reserve as per their scheme. Yilma argued, for instance, that the 100% reserve requested by the British plan, instead of the 40% proposal by him, would hamper the activities of the government and would restrain the expansion of commerce. Furthermore, he referred to the illicit flight of Maria Theresa Dollar from Ethiopia that eventually deprived the Ethiopian government of sufficient money to its reserve.⁶⁴¹

In his conclusion, Yilma emphatically stressed that the beginning of money under the auspices of the British scheme was a trap against the country's sovereignty and it was good to be firm during these seasons of difficulty and trial. This position of Yilma was, of course, in full agreement with Ethiopia's stand as the research so far done demonstrates.⁶⁴² In a separate memorandum, Yilma also made note of problems related to smaller denominations and offered his recommendations. "Ethiopia had always been suspicious of British intentions over the country. Given the total control over policy through their advisors and their heavy military presence, the currency plan must have been perceived as the final touch on the complete absorption of the country into the British Empire as a 'protectorate', if not as a colony."⁶⁴³ The Ethiopian government proposals, according to a British source, were dictated by nationalism 'unfamiliar with the problems involved in the scientific and profitable management of a modern token currency.'⁶⁴⁴

As the Ethiopian government gave its reaction to the Currency Plan in June 1942, in an attempt "to compel the Ethiopians to accede to their demand as per the original terms and conditions, the British were squeezing the government with drastic consequences on economy and society.

⁶⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴² Befekadu Degefe, "The Development of ...," 232-276; Befekadu, "The Making of ...": 23-51;

⁶⁴³ Befekadu, "The Development of ...," 244.

⁶⁴⁴ Quarterly Economic Report[from October 1st, 1942 to December 31st], FO 371/35612.

They removed the reserve of the Maria Theresa Dollar in August 1942 to Harar.”⁶⁴⁵ In fact, prior to this date, according to sources from the Ministry of Finance, Yilma had obtained the information about the smuggling of Maria Theresa Dollar out of Ethiopia via Gambella and Asmara. According to a secret letter addressed to him, it had been estimated that about half a million dollars had gone through Asmara, and probably the same quantity through Gambella. The method used was by putting them in the petrol tankers and covering them with wheat.⁶⁴⁶

Yilma notified Stafford regrettably that frontier customs posts were not yet established with the result that he and other authorities of the Ministry of Finance were unable to exercise such a control as would apprehend the transgressors of the currency.⁶⁴⁷ At the moment, Yilma noted, order was given to establish toll-stations for customs tariff at Adigrat, Adwa, Bati, Moyale, Mändi, Gälabat, Gambella, Dire Dawa and Addis Ababa.⁶⁴⁸ Yilma also gave explanation that he was ‘arranging to have the Customs Tariff promulgated so that the frontier officials might know what exactly to collect on traffic passing their posts and, as soon as this was done, collection of customs dues and inspection of merchandise passing the frontiers would be pursued energetically.’⁶⁴⁹ The regulation of the Customs Tariff was exhaustive (as large as a book), Yilma emphasized in the report, and ‘it had to be drafted and translated into Amharic with great

⁶⁴⁵ Strictly Confidential Economic Report by Stafford, May 21st, 1943, FO 371/35612; Befekadu, “The Making of ...”:29.

⁶⁴⁶ I suppose that Stafford was so kind to Yilma that he informed the smuggling of MTD out of Ethiopia by the British authorities themselves. F.E. Stafford to Yilma Déréssa, 22nd July, 1942, Folder No. D 2592-2630, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁶⁴⁷ Yilma Déréssa to F.E. Stafford, 22nd July, 1942, Folder No. D2592-2630, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁶⁴⁸ “Yä’Gänzäb Ministéř Liqäbäl Yämiğäbaw gäbiwočina Yädärasäbätin Akualhon yämiyasräda zürür” A Report of the Ministry of Finance, Hamle 11, 1934 E.C., Folder No. A 2934-2957, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁶⁴⁹ Yilma Déréssa to F.E. Stafford, 22nd July, 1942, Folder No. D2592-2630, *ŠM*, MOFED.

care. However, for the time being, an abridged copy was made ready with other financial documents and additional man power.’⁶⁵⁰

The Ethiopian government established the State Bank of Ethiopia in August 1942. “The legislation establishing the bank had only three articles. The first identified the proclamation as ‘State Bank Proclamation of 1942’. The second confirmed the establishment of the State Bank while the third set its capital at one Million MTD which shall be provided by the Ministry of Finance.”⁶⁵¹ No legislative ground was laid that would delineate its powers, duties and responsibilities. “Furthermore, while the bank was established in late August, its governor, in the person of C.S. Collier, had been appointed a month earlier.”⁶⁵²

At this moment, Yilma was preoccupied with writing the Charter of the State Bank of Ethiopia while Mr. Collier independently prepared another draft of a charter.⁶⁵³ Notwithstanding, the Charter was issued on 30th November, 1943 with the signature of *Şāhafē Ti’izaz Wäldä-Giorgis Wäldä-Yohannīs*, Yilma’s proclamation can be considered as an important contribution to fiscal centralization in Ethiopia.⁶⁵⁴ The Charter consisted of five articles. Article one endorsed that the Charter endowed the State Bank of Ethiopia with legal personality. In article two it recognized the State Bank as the banker to the government. The next article invested the Bank with full powers to perform commercial banking in Ethiopia and abroad. The fourth one provided the Bank with a seven-man Board of Directors for its administration. The final article deals with the detailed rules and regulations governing its affairs. “The Charter also underlined the fact that the

⁶⁵⁰ “Yä’Gänzāb Ministēr Liqābāl Yāmīgābaw gābiwočīna Yädäräsābātīn Akuahon yāmiyasrāda zürzür” A Report of the Ministry of Finance, Dated Hamle 11, 1934, Folder No. A 2934-2957, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁶⁵¹ *Negarit Gazeta*, Proclamation to Provide For the Establishment of the A State Bank, No. 21 of 1942

⁶⁵² Befedu Degefe, “The Making of ...”: 34.

⁶⁵³ C.S. Collier to Yilma Déréssa, 14th January, 1943, Folder No. A5158-5208, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁶⁵⁴ Yilma Déréssa to S.A. Kaye, Dated 3rd September, 1945, Personal File of Yilma Déréssa, HIO, MOFED. However, it was dated on August 30, 1942 in the gazette. *Negarit Gazeta*, Charter of the State Bank of Ethiopia, General Notice No. 18 of 1943, 3rd Year, No. 3.

SBE was under the Ministry of Finance, which was vested with the power to inspect its accounts as well as the proceedings and minutes of the Board. Furthermore, the Board was required to submit financial statements and annual reports to the Minister of Finance.”⁶⁵⁵

The establishment of the State Bank and the preparation of its Charter, however, did not solve the grave financial problems that confronted Yilma and the government due to the scarcity of Maria Theresa Dollars. “Under the circumstances, the Ethiopian government attempted to control the outflow of MTD. To this effect it enacted a law in September 1942, prohibiting the export of MTD without the express approval of the Director General of Finance.”⁶⁵⁶ Despite legal and administrative efforts to solve the problems related to currency in the country by the Ethiopian government, the ‘chaotic monetary situation’ persisted for few years. Hence, the Ministry of Finance was forced to pay the employees of the Imperial Government in EAS and acute shortage of smaller denominations troubled the country. This led Yilma, probably out of anxiety, even to propose the melting down of Italian Lire at their disposal and re-minting it with the effigy of the emperor to alleviate the currency crisis.⁶⁵⁷

As these and other burning issues of public finance and currency remained unsettled till the last months of 1942, Yilma’s position at the Ministry was raised to that of a Vice-Minister.⁶⁵⁸ Given the responsibilities that Yilma and his subordinates were carrying out, the appointment was indeed a timely decision. With regard to this, Stafford’s opinion, as reflected in his report of 19th October, 1942 to the Private Secretary of the Emperor, sounds plausible. He reported that the Ministry was hampered by the fact that it had no Minister. The Director-General of Finance,

⁶⁵⁵ *Negarit Gazeta*, A Proclamation to Provide For the Establishment of the A State Bank, No. 21 of 1942 Befekadu Degefe, “The Making of...”36.

⁶⁵⁶ *Negarit Gazeta*, Proclamation No. 23 of 1942; Befekadu Degefe, “The Making of ...”: 38

⁶⁵⁷ “*Sila Käränsi Guday*”, Folder No. 15.08.16..NALA

⁶⁵⁸ Wäldä Giorgis Wäldä Yohannēs to Yilma Dérēssa, Dated Tekemit 30, 1935, Personal File of Yilma Dérēssa, HO, MOFED

he kept on arguing, was obliged to combine his own appointment with the duties of minister and director of Finance. The absence of a Minister deprived the Ministry of its full weight in the Council and in the transaction of its business. The political duties of the post of Minister absorbed much the time of Yilma which should have been devoted to administration and organization, to which inadequate attention had been given. Stafford remarked that the progress of the Ministry was greatly retarded by lack of skilled man power.⁶⁵⁹

4.4. Commencing Budgeting

Writing in 1967, an authority in the Ministry of Finance stated that “the preparation and enactment of a governmental budget was a comparatively recent innovation in Ethiopian financial administration.”⁶⁶⁰ More specifically, “budgeting in Ethiopia [was] a post war phenomenon and can therefore be considered as a novel experience.”⁶⁶¹ As far as the concept and practice of ‘Budgeting’ are concerned, it was an obscure and ambiguous experience in Ethiopia.⁶⁶² In early July, 1942, for instance, a public announcement in the *Addis Zämān* news paper invited the interested public to attend a public lecture by Yilma Déréssa about public finance at the *Hagār Fiqir* Hall.⁶⁶³

During the first two years (1941-3), of course, it is not surprising that it proved impossible to draw up a proper budget. The restored government, in the British view, “began on the 1st February 1942 half way through the Ethiopian year 1934 for which no budget was prepared or

⁶⁵⁹ Stafford to the Private Secretary to His Imperial Majesty, Dated, 19th October, 1942, IES, MS 3691, G-51.

⁶⁶⁰ Bulcha Demeksa, “The Ethiopian Budget” *Journal of Ethiopian Law*, 4, No. 2, (1967): 369. The 1931 Constitution.

⁶⁶¹ Assefa Begeule and Eshetu Chole, “A Profile of Ethiopian Economy,” Mimeographed, (Department of Economics, Addis Ababa University, 1967), 53

⁶⁶² Perham, *The Government of...*, 200-216; Christopher Clapham, 155-180; John Markakis, 223-227.

⁶⁶³ *Addis Zämān*: Sene 27, 1934 E.C.

approved. The Ethiopian financial year 1935 began on 11th September 1942. It ended twelve months later without a budget having been approved. The year 1936 began on 12th September 1943 without the preparation of a detailed budget.”⁶⁶⁴ Absence of the tradition of public finance and serious currency difficulties accounted for this impediment.⁶⁶⁵ A conservative outlook of Emperor Hailä Sillase about the modern process of public expenditure seems to have been another factor for the disarray in budgeting since its inception. He, for instance, strongly opposed the idea of publishing a budget document on the ground that “the outside world would say ‘how can His Majesty be Emperor of this large country and only spend £ 2 million a year on his government?’ ”.⁶⁶⁶

Furthermore, the weak positions of the Council of Ministers in general and the Minister of Finance in particular over the budgetary issues compared to the Emperor’s authority were other drawbacks of public finance throughout the imperial reign. Yet, unlike some partial and prejudiced statements without verifiable facts in a study on the Imperial Government of Ethiopia, budgeting in Ethiopia was not an exclusive and arbitrary royal affair.⁶⁶⁷ This section attempts to situate Yilma Déréssa in the very origin of budgeting in Ethiopia.

Besides his effort to build up the Ministry of Finance legally and administratively, Yilma was engaged actively in introducing the tradition of public finance and securing financial resources to the restored government. To this effect, he was occupied with, for instance, persuading the Emperor to launch budgeting under the Ministry of Finance, working with F. E. Stafford especially in translating a guideline prepared by the financial adviser, sending it out to all

⁶⁶⁴ F.E. Staford Report for the Period 1st April to 30th November, 1943, IES.MS 3691.G-51.

⁶⁶⁵ Perham, *The Government of...*200.

⁶⁶⁶ Note of Conversation with His Imperial Majesty on 8th March 1943, 9th March, 1943, FO 371/35611.

⁶⁶⁷ Clapham, 156.

ministries and departments d calling for the submission of their budget estimates for the year 1934 E.C. (1941/1942), and, overseeing its progress.⁶⁶⁸

Long before this circular was sent out to the newly formed ministries and departments of the Ethiopian government, nonetheless, the issue of public finance had been placed at the top in the list of tasks the British officials planned to carry out. During the liberation campaign, for instance, T.R. Blachley, a British officer travelled to Buré (most probably from Khartoum) at the end of March 1941 to discuss matters related to finance with Emperor Hailä Sillassé and Brigadier Sandford. After the discussion, he wrote a communiqué to the latter from Khartom and, proposed that ‘it may be possible to send Colonel Rodd by air to discuss with His Majesty and yourself various questions connected with finance and in particular the preparation of a budget showing estimated payments to Ethiopian authorities, privy purse, salaries of Ethiopian chiefs and officials, police chiefs, services (such as medical) over the next year’.⁶⁶⁹

At this very juncture, according to Ethiopian sources, a notion as well as a plan to begin budgeting was new neither to Yīlma nor to the Emperor. In one of his earliest memorandums to the Emperor, Yīlma, even before the establishment of the Ministry of Finance in September 1941, insisted upon the need to commence public finance in the Ethiopian Government:

የመንግስት መስሪያ ቤቶች ሁሉ ላሙት የሚያስፈልጋቸውን
የወጭ ዝርዝር ቡጂው ከምክር ቤቱ ፊት ከሚቀርብበት ቀን
ሁሉት ወር አስቀድመው ለገንዘብ ሚኒስቴር ማቅረብ አለባቸው።
የገንዘብ ሚኒስቴር ይህን የመስሪያ ቤቶች ያቀረቡትን መዝገብ

⁶⁶⁸ In the archives of the Ministry of Finance (especially at *Šola Mägažän*), one can find the draft as well as the final manuscripts of communiqués, memorandums, minutes, letters and proclamations. Likewise, documents related to payroll, royal authorizations of money addressed to Yīlma Déréssa payable to the individual beneficiaries, imperial grant, budgetary and other financial statements of different government institutions are diposited in the archive of *Ṭäqlay Gīmṣa Bēi(TGB)*, MOFED. B-2315;B-2316;B 2318;B-2319;A-2627;A 2628;B2320;B2321;C2380;A2641;D2347(See Appendix III);A2623; A-2624;A-2625;A2626;C-2378;C 2379;C2393;C2393;B-2327;E2665; A2636;A 2633; D 2350; B2322(See Appendix IV); E 2662;B2331; A2635.

⁶⁶⁹ T.R. Blachley to Brigadier D.A. Sandford, 4th April, 1941, IES,MS, 3691,G-51.

ተመልክቶ አስፈላጊ ባልሆነው ከምክር ቤቱ ውስጥ ይከራከርበታል። ወዲያውም እነዚህን ወጪዎች ደምሮ በድምሩ መጠን በዚያ አመት ውስጥ ሕዝቡ የሚከፈላቸውን ግብርና ቀረጥ ሌላም ታክስ ጨምሮ ወይም ቀንሶ ሙሉ በድጄ ሰርቶ ለምክር ቤቱ ያቀርባል። የምክር ቤቱ የወጭውን ልክ ከወሰነ በኋላ የገንዘብ ሚኒስቴር ለእገሌ መሥሪያ ቤት ይህን ያህል ገንዘብ ክፍል እያለ በተወሰነው ልክ ገንዘብ እንዲከፈል ለኢትዮጵያ ባንክ ተዕዛዝ ያስተላልፋል ባንኩ ገንዘቡ ቢኖርም ባይኖርም ይከፍለዋል። ለዚህ ላጭር ጊዜ ብድር መንግስት ለባንክ ወለድ መክፈል አለበት። ይህ አኳሆን የፌናንስን ሥራ በጣም ስለሚያቃና በዚህ አኳሆን የሚከፈል ወለድ ለመንግስት ጉዳቱ አይደለም።

እንደዚሁ ደግሞ የመንግስት ገቢ ገንዘብ በመጣ ቁጥር የገንዘብ ሚኒስቴር በቀጥታ ወደ ኢትዮጵያ ባንክ ይልካል። ምናልባት ይገኛል ተብሎ የተገመተው ገቢ ሳይገኝ ቢቀር ጉድለቱን የገንዘብ ሚኒስቴር ሞልቶት በሚከተለው በቡጁ ዓመት ውስጥ ትርፍ ግብር ወይም ቀረጥ በሕዝቡ ላይ ይጥላል።

All government departments are expected to send their proposals of estimated yearly expenditure to the Ministry of Finance two months before the Ministry submits the general annual budget plan to the Council of Ministers. The ministry argues against the unacceptable proposals in the Council. Then, totting up the expenditures of all proposals and taking in to consideration the amount of revenue available in that fiscal year, it shall prepare the overall annual budget and submit it to the council for approval. After the Council's endorsement, the Ministry shall authorize payments for departments from Bank of Ethiopia. The Bank, then, shall pay as per the order of the Ministry even in times when no government money is available, and the state should pay its debt with its interest. Though the interest is an extra outlay, this financial arrangement is not detrimental as such to the government business.

*Whenever revenue comes to the Ministry, on the other hand, it shall send the money directly to the Bank of Ethiopia. If lesser amount of revenue is collected than the anticipated sum, the Ministry shall take care of the arrears. So as to recompense this, nonetheless, it shall raise tax and due rates in the next fiscal year.*⁶⁷⁰

⁶⁷⁰ Yilma Déréssa to Emperor Hailä-Sillassé, Not Dated, Folder No. A2934-2957, *SM*, MOFED.

Interestingly, Yilma referred to neither the role of Emperor nor the parliament in this budgetary process. The English circular for budget estimate by Stafford had 14 articles and Yilma, while translating it to Amharic, reduced them to 13 merging the final two articles. Stafford sent the draft document to Yilma with three appendices which demonstrated samples of formats for budget preparation and a table of rates of a monthly salary from clerks to governor-generals. Stafford suggested that “the estimates should be computed in Maria Theresa Dollars.”⁶⁷¹ The British financial adviser reminded Yilma seriously that “a national budget could not be prepared until the actual framework of the government settled and until they knew what ministries and departments had to be provided for.”⁶⁷²

Stafford’s circular letter and annexed samples of finance documents give, I may say, the impression that budget was a new concept to officials of the Ethiopian Government. Though sources at the Ministry of Finance are silent on the practice of budgeting prior to 1941, however, the legal framework had already been developed in the 1931 Constitution. Article 55 of the 1931 Constitution, for instance, proclaimed that:

The law lays down that the receipts of the Government Treasury of whatever nature they may be, shall only be expended in conformity with the annual budget fixing the sums to be at the disposition of each ministry. The annual budget shall be framed on the basis proposed by the Ministry of Finance during deliberations in the

⁶⁷¹ The rates of salary were divided into three classes for each position. The amount of payment for 1st, 2nd and 3rd class governor-generals were respectively MTD 1000, 750, and 500. For the first two classes of Director-Generals MTD 500 and 375; for General Secretary, MTD 200,150 and 100; for treasurers, MTD 150,110,75; for chief department officers, MTD 100-120,70 and 50; for chief clerks, MTD 80,60,45; for chief accountants, MTD 80,60,45; for clerks according to qualifications, MTD 25-45,5-45 and 25-40. F.E. Stafford to Yilma Déréssa, 18th September, 1941, IES, MS 3691, G-51. In the list of the 37 employees at the head office of the Ministry of Finance, the first class salary rate was installed. See Yilma Déréssa to Gäbrä Mariam Amänté, Tqīmt, 14,1934, E.C.Folder No. B-2314, TGB, MOFED.

⁶⁷² F.E. Stafford to Yilma Déréssa, 18th September, 1941, IES, MS 3691, G-51.

*Chamber of Duties and in the Senate, whose resolutions shall be submitted for the approval of the Emperor.*⁶⁷³

That being the legal framework, in the period between the proclamation of the 1931 Constitution and the Italian invasion in 1935, no source in the archives of the Ministry of Finance implies, let alone testifies, the practice of budgeting in Ethiopia in a true sense of the term. Nevertheless, Emperor Hailä Sillassé attempted to introduce the tradition of public finance in some provinces.⁶⁷⁴

Concerning the budget year, Stafford also suggested in his circular letter that it could run from 1st July to 30th June. As it was recommended in the circular, “the Ethiopian Government would

⁶⁷³ “This provision”, Bulcha Dämāqsa wrote, “presumably was the constitutional basis for the budgets for 1945 and 1946, although not for the budget published as a Ministerial Notice for 1953. The 1931 Constitution was superseded in 1955 by the Revised Constitution. The provisions of the new Constitution relating directly to the budget are Article 114-118.” Bulcha Demeksa, “The Ethiopian Budget..”: 370. The relatively elaborate provisions are the following: Article 114. None of the public revenues shall be expended, except as authorized by law. Article 115. The fiscal year shall be fixed by special law. The Council of Ministers shall, each year, with the approval of the Emperor, and in accordance with the requirements of the law, present to Parliament a draft of law for the approval of the budget of the following year, which budget shall accompany the said draft of law. Article 116. Each of the Chambers of Parliament shall examine the said budget in detail and vote on item by item. Parliament shall, under no circumstances, increase the total sum set down in the budget for expenditures. The allowance for unforeseen expenses in the said budget shall be fixed by Parliament. Parliament shall complete the budget vote for submission to the Emperor at least one month before the beginning of the new fiscal year. Article 117. If the draft of law presented, as provided in Article 116, has not been approved by Parliament and proclaimed as law before the beginning of the new fiscal year, the budget of the previous year shall continue in force until a new budget law has been proclaimed. Article 118. If additional funds are urgently required in the course of any fiscal year the Minister or the Ministers concerned, shall present a supplementary budget to the Council of Ministers, who, with the approval of the Emperor, may present an appropriate draft of law to the Chamber of Deputies. The Revised Constitution of 1955.

⁶⁷⁴ In his study on the evolution of land tenure in Ethiopia, Shiferaw (1995, 101) has clearly indicated how the Sovereign had planned and made an effort to implement public finance before the Italian invasion. Quoting the Emperor (Hailä Sillassé, 1965, 54), he has given an in-depth analysis on the abolition of *sīrit*. “It had remained customary in Ethiopia for all provincial governors to be military chiefs, but there were no civilian rulers. Therefore it was not the custom for the whole country to be under the authority of the government and to allocate taxes, collected by the civilian officials, to the army and for other government business, but the governors used to pay soldiers through their own officers and to give them quarters in their governorates. As we were uneasy about abolishing all at once this custom which had persisted for a long time, thinking that it might provoke disturbances in the country, we arranged to demonstrate this mode of procedure and to make it acceptable in slow stages by placing under the authority of the (central) government the districts of Jijiga, Tehartcher, Bale, Wellega, Sayo and Jimma; and we also saw to it, as an instructive example, that revenues be applied to the expenditure on the army and other government business.” Hailä Sillassé (Emperor), *Hiywätena Yä-Etiyopia Īrmīga* Vol. I (Addis Ababa: 1965, E.C.), 54.

begin to function properly as such from the first November 1941.”⁶⁷⁵ It is important to mention here that “prior to enactment of the Fiscal Year Proclamation in 1959 (No.162), the Ethiopian budgetary was the Ethiopian calendar year (September 11). Under the Fiscal Year Proclamation, a fiscal year commencing on 8th July (Hamlé 1 E.C.) of the Gregorian calendar was adopted.”⁶⁷⁶

Despite the efforts at the Ministry of Finance to receive budget estimates at the beginning of November 1941 from the various government departments, due to different inconveniences, the deadline for the submission of estimated budget was extended to mid-January 1942.⁶⁷⁷ Still unable to meet the time limit again, by the end of May 1942, only “8 of the 13 estimates called for had been received. As it was decided to allow ministries [to request whatever amount they needed], instead of rationing the available million among them, it was obvious that the total of the estimates would come to much more than twice the agreed maximum.”⁶⁷⁸ Yilma, unlike the 2 million pound budget estimate done by the British authorities, had already suggested an approximately a 4.24 million pound or 44.58 million MTD annual budget estimate.⁶⁷⁹

Obviously, securing a financial source was a burning issue for the newly established government of Ethiopia. Like its military assistance in the liberation campaign, it was the British government which supplied the resource.⁶⁸⁰ Given its decisive role in Ethiopian politics, the British control over the government finance and the country’s security was tight.⁶⁸¹ General Sir Philip Mitchell,

⁶⁷⁵ Stafford assumed that the period for the functioning of the Ethiopian government begun on the day when the fiscal year embarked on. F.E. Stafford to Yilma Déréssa, 18th September, 1941, IES, MS 3691, G-51.

⁶⁷⁶ Bulcha Demeksa, “The Ethiopian Budget,” 369.; Stafford to Private Secretary to His Imperial Majesty, Report on the Ministry of Finance (1st February, 1942-30th September, 1942) 19th October, 1942, IES, MS 3691, G-51.

⁶⁷⁷ Yilma Déréssa, *Buḡé Yämisärabäṭin Äkuahuan Yämiyasiräda Mamälkäça*, Not Dated, Folder No. A 2934-2957, ŠM, MOFED.

⁶⁷⁸ Stafford to Private Secretary to His Imperial Majesty, Report on the Ministry of Finance (1st February, 1942-30th September, 1942) 19th October, 1942, IES, MS 3691, G-51.

⁶⁷⁹ Yilma Déréssa to Stafford, 28th December, 1941, IES, MS 3691, G-51.

⁶⁸⁰ The Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement of 31st January 1942, Addis Ababa, 31st of January 1942.

⁶⁸¹ Marcus, *The Politics of ...*, 12.

Chief of Occupied Enemy Territory Administration, “even wanted London to control all taxation and public expenditure, to have justice administered by British officers, and to keep the Ethiopian army subject to War Office command.”⁶⁸² As Harold Marcus remarked Haile Sellassie was in fact an emperor among his people, but he was not yet ruler in Addis Ababa a capital occupied in April 1941 by the British who had immediately established a military government for what they considered ‘Occupied Enemy Territory Administration’.⁶⁸³ “The prominent role that the British played in the process of liberation, for their own global strategic reasons, gave them a position of ascendancy in Ethiopia.”⁶⁸⁴ In connection with this, needless to say, the major monetary source for the Ethiopian authorities, both in the course of the liberation campaign and in the very restoration of the Imperial Government of Ethiopia, was the British administration.⁶⁸⁵

In order to re-establish the administration of the Ethiopian government, the United Kingdom offered a sum total of £ 3,250, 000 for four years.⁶⁸⁶ The grant was divided into four installments in such amounts as £ 1,500,000, £ 1,000,000, £ 500,000 and £ 250,000 to cover part of the budget expenditures in the years 1942, 1943, 1944 and 1945 respectively.⁶⁸⁷ According to this

⁶⁸² Ibid., 10

⁶⁸³ Ibid., 8, 10.

⁶⁸⁴ Bahru, *A History of ...*, 179.

⁶⁸⁵ Note on Ethiopian Government Finance by Brigadier Sandford, 2nd January, 1942, IES, MS 3691,G-51

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁷ This was later on included in the 1942 Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement (Article 4/a). According to the agreement, “payments would be made in quarterly installments in advance. The subsequent terms under Article 4 are the following: 4(b) His Majesty the Emperor agrees for his part that this grant shall absolve the Government of the United Kingdom from any payments, in respect of the use of immovable property of the Ethiopian State which may be required by the British forces in Ethiopia during the war. 4(c) His Majesty the Emperor agrees that there shall be the closest co-operation between the Ethiopian authorities and his British Advisor, to be appointed in accordance with Article 2 (a), regarding public expenditure. 4(d) In order to facilitate the absorption into Ethiopian economy of the funds to be provided under paragraph (a) above, and to promote the early resumption of trade between Ethiopia and the surrounding territories, His Majesty the Emperor agrees that in all matters relating to currency in Ethiopia the Government of the United Kingdom shall be consulted and that arrangements concerning it shall be made only With the concurrence of that Government.” The Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement of 31st January 1942, Addis Ababa, 31st of January 1942. “Though Ethiopia had gained important treaty recognition and assistance, Haile Sellassie was inherently dissatisfied

allocation, the total amount for the 1942 (1934 E.C.) budget was £ 1,500,000 plus an extra £ 500,000 fund expended on extraordinary items. In his letter to Yilma Déréssa, Colonel F.E. Stafford argued that “the foreseen annual revenue of Ethiopia at the time was only £ 1,250,000 and the £ 2 million total was considerably more than this.”⁶⁸⁸ Under wise administration, however, the revenue would increase and there would undoubtedly be a substantial saving on the approved estimate. As a result, Stafford considered that the figure (£ 2 million) to be a prudent ‘first shot’. According to his proposed financial allotment, “the extra half million pound was allocated for settlement of patriots and restoration of damage (£ 225,000), restoring and furnishing government buildings (£ 75,000), rewards to chiefs and patriots (£ 125,000) and special road works (£ 75,000).”⁶⁸⁹

However, according to Yilma’s plain assessment, the overall revenue probably for the year 1941/1942 would not exceed 20 million Maria Theresa dollars. Considering both the Italian expenditure during the occupation period and the estimation by the British financial adviser, Yilma also made his rough guess that the annual expenditure amounted to 35 million Maria Theresa dollars. While the newly prepared public finance showed a considerable budget deficit, he emphasized, the revenue out of the land tax proclaimed in November 1941 was not supposed to address the financial problem.⁶⁹⁰

The agreement on the amount of total expenditure (£2,000,000) was reached after successive discussions and debates in which the Emperor and Yilma Déréssa actively participated.

with the agreement's demeaning tone, the British presence on Ethiopian territory, and with London's control over finance.” Marcus, *The Politics of...*, 12.

⁶⁸⁸ F.E. Stafford to Yilma Déréssa, 22nd December, 1941, IES, MS 3691, G-51

⁶⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹⁰ Most likely, this estimate was made before 28th December, 1941 because Yilma presented a detailed estimate of revenue and expenditure with different figures from this one. Yilma Déréssa to the Council of Ministers, Not dated. Folder No. A 2934-2957, ŠM, MOFED.

Sometime in the beginning of May 1941, Emperor Hailä Sillassé asked Brigadier Maurice S. Lush, the Deputy Chief Political Officer, for an estimate of Italian capital expenditure in Ethiopia and Lush submitted a note prepared by Lt-Colonel F.E. Stafford, Deputy Financial Adviser. Based on the estimation, within four years, “about £ 63 million was spent on capital works in Ethiopia.”⁶⁹¹

Emperor Hailä Sillassé and Yilma Déréssa met Brigadier Sandford (adviser at the Ministry of Interior) and Lt. Colonel Stafford (Ministry of Finance) in late December 1941 to discuss the amount of the initial budget. Despite his presence in the discussion, nothing is reported about Yilma in the document. It was the Emperor who opened the conversation by reminding the British advisers about the average annual amount of money (£ 17 million) the Italians had spent in Ethiopia. The Deputy Financial Adviser emphasized that the amount of expenditure depended on the amount of revenue that could be generated from the country which, according to their assessment, was much less than £ 2 million (£ 1,250,000).⁶⁹² The emperor made note of how the revenue estimate did not consider the possible income from provinces and how it was also affected by the war. Furthermore, he made the point that one must consider not only the financial but also the social position of the country, and that the war mentality existing at that time made it more difficult to get the people to accept retrenchment, and for political reasons the newly established Ethiopian government might have to expend more. On the contrary, Colonel Stafford stressed that over-expenditure would only mean a rise of prices of goods in the country. He very

⁶⁹¹ Deputy Chief Political Officer to Emperor Haile Sellasse, 20 May, 1941, IES., MS, 3691.G-51. (This letter was sent to the emperor signed by Blachley in lieu of Brigadier M.S. Lush); Record of a Conversation with his Majesty, 22/12/41, 41 IES,MS 3691.G-51.

⁶⁹² Record of a Conversation with his Majesty, 22/12/41, 41 IES,MS 3691.G-51.

strongly advised that even if the Emperor thought that more money should be allocated for some items he should confine the total expenditure within two million pounds.⁶⁹³

Few days after the conversation, Yilma Déréssa sent a letter to Colonel Stafford in response to the latter's memo on the list of budget for 1934 E.C.⁶⁹⁴ Reminding Stafford that he suggested the sum of £1,790,000 as a total budget which the Ethiopian Government could spend during the budget year (1934 E.C.), Yilma commented on the exclusion of allocation for the Civil List, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Commerce from the budget list. Having compared the list of expenditure which Stafford had forwarded with the one Yilma himself had prepared various discussions with the heads of departments, Yilma remarked that the provisions made in the estimate of Stafford for provincial administration, stationary, police, prison and education were far too small.

Education, according to Yilma, was another matter which required serious consideration. He emphasized that he had discussed the matter with the Minister of Education and pointed out that a special expenditure on education for the children of ex-slaves would be necessary. In addition to this, there was the problem of adult training for the new civil service. Unless this scheme of training was implemented, illiteracy would hamper seriously the good working of the administration.⁶⁹⁵ Besides, Yilma insisted that allocation had to be made for the Ministry of Interior itself. In attachment to his letter, Yilma had suggested, contrary to Stafford's budget estimate, a total of £ 4,246,425 or MT \$ 44,587,462.50 for the year.⁶⁹⁶ In a nutshell, though

⁶⁹³ Record of a Conversation with his Majesty Emperor Hailä Sillassé, 22/12/41, 41 IES, MS 3691, G-51.

⁶⁹⁴ Yilma Déréssa to Stafford, 28-12-41., IES, MS 3691, G-51.

⁶⁹⁵ It is interesting to note here that in late 1942, based on the decision of a committee, about 95 soldiers were transferred from the Finance Police Department to the Ministry of War due to their illiteracy. Chief of Finance Police to the Ministry of Finance, dated Hidar 19, 1935, Folder No. C-2378, TGB, MOFED.

⁶⁹⁶ Though I couldn't find Stafford's letter to Yilma dated 12th December, 1941 in which he suggested the sum of £ 1,790,000, in his memo after ten days, the adviser suggested an approximate budget estimate to £ 1.79 with

Yilma was said to be very critical of excess expenditure on the military sector throughout his government service,⁶⁹⁷ the matter of security and administrative centralization seems to have been a pertinent question as far as Yilma's estimation is concerned. Here, more than 54% of the total budget, according to his calculation, would go to the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of War.

When we look at Yilma's justifications for his budget estimate against the proposal by the British authorities, he also pointed out that there were a large number of families in Ethiopia who had lost their members in service to the government during the war. "Families of the deceased men would naturally claim pension from the state and the government would be morally and politically bound not to reject this claim."⁶⁹⁸

In agreement with Stafford on the inflationary effect of a larger capital expenditure than £500,000, Yilma thought that there were a number of factories essential to the life of the people (specially at the time of war when import was very restricted); unless these industries were capitalized and looked after, not only would the essential commodities be absent from the market, but the machines would themselves fall out of use. In addition, a large number of people, whose livelihood depended upon these industries, would be unemployed. As it was, the Ethiopian Government, with its financial capacity, could not hope to give employment to anything like what the Italians had done, and, Yilma proposed, the political and social

a detail allocations: For Civil List £ 150,000; Printing and Stationery, £ 15,000; Police, £ 150,000; Prisons, £20,000; Secretariat, £ 10,000; Provincial Administration £ 380,000; Finance and Commerce, £ 100,000; Judicial and Legal, £ 50,000; Education £ 45,000; Agriculture £ 20,000; Medical £ 150,000; Veterinary, Surveying and Geology, £ 25,000; Posts and Telegraphs £ 60,000; Roads, £ 175,000; Army £ 600,000; Grants for Municipalities and other Subventions, £ 100,000. This subtotal gives us £ 2,050,000 and plus costs of British Advisers (£ 75, 000) the sum total would become £ 2,125,000. Yilma Déréssa to Stafford, dated 28-12-41., IES.MS 3691.G-51.

⁶⁹⁷ Yilma Déréssa, "Sile Timirt pirogramina polisi", Säne 11, 1937, Folder No. A 6042-6070, *ŠM*, MOFED; "Yä'gänzäb Ministér s'ilä 1957 A.M. Yä Finansina Yäbägät hunéta läministroč mükir bét Yaqärbäw Mastawäša", File No.145, Folder No. 62.1.23.98, NALA:Informants: Bulča Dämäqsa, Tädla Täshomä and Sofäa Yilma.

⁶⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

consequence of an unemployment had not to be underestimated at such a difficult time (as early 1940s).

Furthermore, while making considerable effort to cut down expenditure and to balance the budget, Yilma argued, the British authorities should not lose sight of the fact that too much restriction of expenditure might lead to impossibility of building an effective administrative structure which, in the long run would be the only good road to economic wellbeing. Yilma underlined the fact that the most important reason for the Ethiopian Government to request financial aid from the Government of the United Kingdom was to achieve this objective. Despite Yilma's and the Emperor's incessant request, finally, the financial aid to cover the first budget was limited to £ two million.⁶⁹⁹ Here, to place Yilma's proposals and efforts within the historical context of regard to public finance in Ethiopia, a few words about the earliest budgets of the country is in order.

Though difficult to find out the actual figures of expenditure for the year 1941/42(1934 E.C.), quoting the *Ethiopian Memoranda*, Margery Perham (1965) gives about MTD 11,940,000.⁷⁰⁰ David Talbot (1955) states that Eth \$ 12,047,000 was allocated for the annual budget of the government for the same year.⁷⁰¹ Unlike for the year 1934 E.C., both foreign and locally generated sources reveal relatively detailed information about the expenditure for the year 1942/43(1935 E.C.). In my research, I came across different figures about the 1935 E.C. budget. To begin with, the published data show that the actual expenditure was MTD 25,223, 588 against the estimated MTD 24, 642, 822. In that fiscal year, the annual actual revenue was MTD 27, 154,413 against the estimated revenue of MTD 23, 291,690. Of this total revenue, forty-eight

⁶⁹⁹ The Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement of 31st January 1942, Addis Ababa. 31st of January 1942.

⁷⁰⁰ Perham. *The Government of...*, 201.

⁷⁰¹ David Abner Talbot, *Haile Selassie I Silver Jubilee* (The Hague: W.P. Van Stockum & Zoon, Publishers, 1955), 207.

percent was provided by the British subvention.⁷⁰² This amounted to MTD 11,180,000 (approximately £1,064,762). Stafford's figures, however, diverge slightly from this. He reported that the actual expenditure was MTD 23,635,552 against the estimated MTD 24,642, 822.⁷⁰³ About \$ 23,291,590 was expected to be collected and, according to Stafford's figures, the Ministry could really collect MTD 24, 683,177. Another summarized calculation gives us only a one page register of estimated expenditure similar to the above figure (MTD 24,642, 822).⁷⁰⁴

However, Ethiopian records of a later period on the 1935 E.C. budget deviate from this to some extent. According to the report of the office of the Chief Treasury of the Ministry of Finance, the actual revenue and expenditure for the year were 27,399,002 and MTD 27, 709,164 respectively. Of the total revenue of the fiscal year, \$11,250,000 (approximately £1,071,428) was a grant from the British Government.⁷⁰⁵ The amount paid was a bit more than the fixed sum for the year 1943 (£ 1,000,000).⁷⁰⁶ Talbot (1955) gives us again a different figure (Eth \$ 25,095,000) in Ethiopian currency, though such a currency didn't exist in 1935 E.C.⁷⁰⁷

As to the British aid, documents in the Ministry of Finance show that Yilma, on behalf of His Imperial Majesty, received £ 125,000 on 16th February under the Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement of 31st January 1942 the money allocated to top the budget since 1st February, 1942.⁷⁰⁸ At the beginning of the month, Yilma received £ 100,000 and assured the British authorities that the Ethiopian Government would accept full responsibly for all liabilities incurred by the British Military Authorities in Ethiopia from their entry into the country until the date of the signature of

⁷⁰² *Ibid.*

⁷⁰³ Report by Financial Adviser for the Period 1st April to 30th November, 1943, IES,MS 3691,G-51;

⁷⁰⁴ Summary of Expenditure, Folder No. B 2322, TGB, MOFED. .

⁷⁰⁵ Chief Treasurer to Director General, Tahsas, 19, 1937 E.C., Folder No.A 5377-5446, ŠM, MOFED.

⁷⁰⁶ The Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement of 31st January 1942, Addis Ababa, 31st of January 1942.

⁷⁰⁷ Talbot, 207.

⁷⁰⁸ Yilma Déréssa to Philip Mitchell, 16th February, 1942, Folder No. D 1782-1843, ŠM, MOFED.

the Agreement, in respect of salaries, wages or payment for services rendered by the British personnel to the provincial administration of the country.⁷⁰⁹

Exactly a month later (16th March, 1942) Yilma received from R.G. Howe 5,000,000 East African Shillings. These two grants seem to have represented the first installment.⁷¹⁰ On 24th June, 1942 he received 7,500,000 East African Shillings as a second installment of the grant.⁷¹¹ On 14th August, 1942, Yilma confirmed the receipt of another 7,500,000 East African Shilling representing the third installment.⁷¹² If British financial aid was given in such intervals, “allocations of budget were made upon a monthly basis to the departments”⁷¹³ of the Imperial Government of Ethiopia.

In spite of considerable help from the British, it cannot be concluded that Ethiopia was completely at the mercy of the European grant. The Emperor, Yilma and other authorities tried their best to secure additional sources of revenue. In connection with this, the business deal with the British authorities to export wheat and other cereals to the Middle East was an important source for which Yilma exerted his individual effort. It is obvious that “given the ongoing war, demand was high for all primary products, but particularly for wheat and other cereals in short supply in the Middle East.”⁷¹⁴

Yilma, like Mäkonin Habtä-Wäld-the then Minister of Commerce, was an active participant in an economic conference held in Addis Ababa on April 1, 1942. This conference was initiated by

⁷⁰⁹ Yilma Déréssa to Philip Mitchell, Dated 4th February, 1942, Folder No. D 1782-1843, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁷¹⁰ Letter of confirmation by Yilma Déréssa, Dated 16th March, 1942, Folder No. D 1782-1843, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁷¹¹ Letter of confirmation by Yilma Déréssa, Dated 24th June, 1942, Folder No. D 1782-1843, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁷¹² Letter of confirmation by Yilma Déréssa, Dated 14th August, 1942, Folder No. D 1782-1843, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁷¹³ Perham, *The Government of...* 200.

⁷¹⁴ Marcus, *The Politics of...* 4

His Imperial Majesty and some seventeen British as well as Ethiopian authorities were participated on its three ensuing sessions.⁷¹⁵ One of the objects of the conference was “the examination of Ethiopia’s contribution to the war effort and the export of grains to the Middle East.”⁷¹⁶ Raising the question of the balance of trade, Yilma argued, if the government were to be successful in their efforts to promote exports of cereals and imports were considerably restricted ‘owing to the difficulties in obtaining shipping space and other transportation problems’, there would be the danger of unfavorable reaction on the cost of living with the result that grain prices would be forced up. He also proposed that a sub-committee be appointed to report on the currency aspect of the export and import situation. Furthermore, in his response to the statement of Colonel Birchall’s that ‘records showed no exports of grain prior to the occupation of the Italians were held by the Railway’, Yilma pointed out that “the territory covered by the railway was not fertile for grain crops. The large production of grain in Gojam and Wällo allowed an export to the Sudan at much lower prices than those in Addis Ababa.”⁷¹⁷

Besides his crucial advisory role in the export of cereals, Yilma participated actively in facilitating the transportation service for export items. He, for instance, entered into agreement with the Shell Company to make an adequate amount of petrol available for trucks.⁷¹⁸ Moreover, taking into account the shortage of sacks in the country, he proposed to the emperor the idea of “reconsidering the expulsion of 14 Italians who had been working for the sack producing

⁷¹⁵ Minutes of Economic Conference Held on 1st April, 1942, FO 371/31599..

⁷¹⁶ Howe to Eden, 7th May 7, 1942, FO 371/31599.

⁷¹⁷ In February 1942, Mäkonin Habtäwäld reported that 617 tons of wheat, 760 tons of tef, 205 tons of flour, 605 tons of dura, 46 tons of macaroni, 18 tons of biscuits, 93 tons of various vegetables were exported from the Addis Ababa area to Eritrea. See Minutes of Economic Conference Held on 1st April, 1942, FO 371/31599. In response to the heavy demand for cereals in the neighboring territories and in the Middle East, efforts were made to obtain all the wheat required to feed the large European population in Eritrea from the exportable surplus of Northern Ethiopia. See, Quarterly Economic Report[October 1942-December 1942], FO 371/35612

⁷¹⁸ Ministry of Interior to Director General of Finance, Nähasé 4, 1934 E.C., Folder No. A 5158-5208, *ŠM*, MOFED.

factory.” To this effect, Yilma proposed “the involvement of Mr. David Hall, a British Custodian of Enemy Property as a mediator. The issue of Hessian Rope Factory, a plant run by an Italian company, was discussed on the economic conference of April 1, and there was a general discussion on the question of the retention of Italians.”⁷¹⁹ He suggested that the cereals that were collected from farmers as tithe payment and the produce of the state domain (*hudad*), “could be deposited at Dässé, Mäqällé, [Harär]gé and other major towns of the country.”⁷²⁰

In addition to this, revenue had already been also generated from service at the hot spring (most probably in Addis Ababa (*fil wiha*)) and from dues on woods. For instance, Yilma reported, the ministry could collect 34,000 Lira in one week from the service of hot spring.⁷²¹ By then, employees were sent to fill the Finance Offices of ten provinces together with the necessary stationary and other office materials. Moreover, Yilma also mentioned in a report to the monarch that he and *Qäñazmač* Dähné had visited a house in which a money minting machine was deposited but the British had locked the door, so they could not enter into the interior. The Emperor gave the instruction to Yilma to bring this issue to the attention of his British adviser, Colonel F.E. Stafford.⁷²²

The financial and material resources of the Italians seem to have served as a logistic resource for the Ethiopian Government. Reference was also made, as mentioned earlier, in a family document that Yilma had requested the Emperor to assign patriots under *Fitawrari* Šäwa Īrkabih and *fitawrari* Yilma Bäšah to serve as finance ‘guards’ and, consequently, they became the first

⁷¹⁹ The Hessian Rope Factory, according to Lieutenant Goldbourne could produce all the sacks that Ethiopia needed. The import of sacks over the last 6 months amounted to 186 tons whilst the production of the factory for the same period was about equal. Minutes of Economic Conference Held on 1st April, 1942. FO 371/31599.

⁷²⁰ Yilma Déréssa to Emperor Hailä Sillassé, Yäkatit 7, 1934 E.C., Folder No. A2934-2957, ŠM, MOFED.

⁷²¹ Yilma Déréssa to Emperor Haile Sellasse, Hidar 6, 1934 E.C., Folder No. A 2934-2957, ŠM, MOFED.

⁷²² A notable Ethiopian scholar stated that a money minting machine was imported to Ethiopia for the first time in 1903 (1896 E.C.). Mahtämä Sillassé, 198.

finance polices. Furthermore, in an attempt to bring together, administer and allocate government properties, Yilma took charge of the Orma Garage.⁷²³

Documents from the Ministry of Finance illustrate that Ethiopia, besides British financial aid, was in search of her own resources as far as situations allowed. For instance, a look at a communiqué of Yilma's proposal on the Yubdo mining concession to the Emperor elucidates, at least, how he was seeking out proactively every opportunity to augment the state revenue in these seasons of difficulty and trial. Though the concession belonged to his family members (*Bilatta Déréssa* and *Azaž Wärqinäh Išäté*, his new father-in-law) who did not return from exile and Empress Mänän, Yilma took the initiative and made a preliminary business deal with an engineer in October 1941. This was approximately one year before "*Hakim Wärqinäh* went to the palace and had long conversation with the Emperor on different subjects including the Yubdo mininig concession."⁷²⁴ Yilma, referring to records, reminded the emperor that 12 *wäqét* of gold was mined monthly before the war. The engineer with whom Yilma made a business deal proposed to quarry 20 *wäqét*. In return, he requested a monthly salary of 1,000 MTD. Furthermore, for one additional *wäqét*, he offered a 15% commission.⁷²⁵ Though not pertinent to trace the progress of this business deal in a study of this kind, it was learnt that "the mining was brought under the Ministry of Finance and Yilma seems to have exercised a degree of control over the concession while a Minister of Finance."⁷²⁶ After a year or two, the Emperor "requested *Qés Mammo Çorqa* to take charge of the Yubdo mine. After consultation with the Säyyoo elders

⁷²³ Informant: Bulča Dämäqsa; Family Appeal to PMAC.

⁷²⁴ Garretson, *A Victorian Gentleman*....282.

⁷²⁵ Yilma Déréssa to Emperor Hailä Sillassé, Tīqīmt 10, 1934 E.C, Folder No. A2934-2957. ŠM, MOFED.

⁷²⁶ Garretson, *A Victorian Gentleman*....282 and 293.

Mammo accepted the government assignment.”⁷²⁷ But, in the period that followed, “Yubdo had troubled Yilma involving his father-in-law.”⁷²⁸

To wind up, this chapter, in four sections, has shown the initiatives, plans and accomplishments of Yilma Déréssa as middle level official of the Ethiopian Government until November 1942. Appointed by the Emperor and advised by the British finance expert, Colonel Frank Stafford, Yilma had submitted memorandums chiefly to the emperor on the need to launch a new national currency, standardized taxation and public expenditure. Besides submitting proposals, he actively engaged in running the Ministry. With respect to this, he had played a crucial role in laying the foundations of the Ministry of Finance.

The next chapter covers Yilma’s public life in the Ministry of Finance since November 1942 after which he was appointed as Vice-Minister until his transfer to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in 1949. Obviously, during this period Yilma’s jurisdiction as a Vice-Minister became were legally defined and his responsibilities were also emensely enhanced. The chapter, thus, focuses mainly on significant state services of my subject of the study in the Ministry. Major official activities, beyond the areas of finance and economy, in which he was taking part occasionally, are also discussed.

⁷²⁷ Johannes Launhardt, “Mammo Čorqa,” in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol 3, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 717a.

⁷²⁸ For instance, “*azaž* Wärqinäh and *Blatta* Déréssa Amänté claimed return of their concession plus compensation for the equipment that the Italians had removed as well as for the platinum and gold they had taken from the mine. For example, about a year later on Yilma’s communiqué, *Azaž* Wärqinäh went to the Palace and had long conversation with the Emperor on different subjects. As regards the Yubdo Gold and platinum concession the Emperor informed him that the matter was quite settled that he could talk about it with Yilma. The Emperor also told the *Azaž* that the man Rhigino Alexander and the sub-governor of Aira Yubdo *fitawrari* Taba Wase had been proved to be robbers.” Garretson, *A Victorian Gentleman*....293.

Chapter Five

Yīlma as a Vice-Minister:

Building up the Ministry of Finance and other Responsibilities (1942-1949)

It was almost three weeks after the Financial Adviser sent his report to the Private Secretary of Emperor Hailä Sillassé that the sovereign appointed Yīlma as a Vice-Minister.⁷²⁹ This, of course, enabled Yīlma to become a member of the Council of Ministers officially⁷³⁰, to deal with more important duties and responsibilities as far as public finance is concerned. On that very date, the Emperor also appointed Aklilu Habtäwäld as a Vice-Minister of Pen; *Bilata* Ephrém Täwäldä Mädhīn as Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs; *Fitawrari* Alāmayāhu Tānna⁷³¹, as the Director-General of the Ministry of Pen; *Ato* Gétahun Täsāma, the Director General of the Ministry of Interior and *Ato* Mīnasé Lāmma, the Director-General of the Ministry of Finance.⁷³² Accordingly, *Ṣāhafé Tizaz* Wäldä-Giorgis Wäldä-Yohanis called upon Yīlma to attend his first meeting at the Council of Ministers on November 22, 1942.⁷³³ From this time on, attending the weekly meetings of the Council of Ministers became one of the major duties of Yīlma.

Yet again, three months later, an important legal announcement was made that defined the powers and duties of the Ministers of the Imperial Government.⁷³⁴ This, at least, signified,

⁷²⁹ Report on the Ministry of Finance by F.E. Stafford, Dated 21st May, 1943, FO 371/35612.

⁷³⁰ Article 21 of Order No. 1 of 1943 stated that 'a Vice-Minister may attend meetings of the Council of Ministers but may only vote when the Minister of the Ministry to which he belongs has not been appointed or is absent.' An Order to Define the Powers and Duties of Our Ministers (Order No. 1 of 1943), *Negarit Gazeta*, 2nd Year No. 5, January 29, 1943.

⁷³¹ It seems probable that he was the same Alāmayāhu Tānna who was unpopular among the people in Wağārat and he was replaced by *Fitawrari* Kiflē Dādī in November 1942. See Gebru Tareke, *Ethiopia: Power and Protest, Peasant Revolts in Twentieth Century*, (New Jersey: The Red Sea Press, 1996), 106.

⁷³² *Negarit Gazeta*, 2nd Year No. 2, 31th October, 1942.

⁷³³ Wäldä-Giorgis Wäldä-Yohanis to Yīlma Déréssa, 19th November 1942. Personal File of Yīlma Déréssa, HO, MOFED; Report on the Ministry of Finance by F.E. Stafford, 21st May, 1943, FO 371/35612.

⁷³⁴ The Minister of Finance was given more power in this proclamation compared to the same institution in the pre-war period. An Order to Define the Powers and Duties of Our Ministers (Order No. 1 of 1943), *Negarit Gazeta*, 2nd Year No. 5, January 29, 1943. According to article 45 of an Order, the minister would prepare and submit draft laws necessary for the proper administration of his Ministry. He would make regulations in accordance

compared to the pre-war status of the Ministry of Finance, the central place that this growing institution was occupying in the Imperial Government of Ethiopia.

Yilma, as a foremost official in the Ministry, exercised this power considerably from this time on. In the period under discussion, recommencing the Ethio-America diplomatic relations, he had played a pivotal role, for instance, in securing the remarkable economic assistance from USA and introducing of the Ethiopian new currency. Not to forget some exceptional and routine responsibilities at the Ministry of Finance, reforming modern education in Ethiopia was also another undertaking of Yilma in mid 1940s. Guided by, certainly, the available sources on these developments, in this chapter, I will attempt to reconstruct these and other accomplishments of Yilma Déréssa in the period between 1942 and 1949.

5.1 Yilma Déréssa in the Response to the British Hegemonic Position in Ethiopia

Almost all the published literature indicates that the relationship between the British and Ethiopian authorities over the issues of finance and economy was an engagement of little ease, to say the least. Especially the issue of the new Ethiopian currency, discussed in the previous

with the law. He would give such orders as may be necessary to ensure the proper carrying out of the work of his Ministry and will supervise its execution. Article 46 described the specific duties and responsibilities of the Minister. "The Minister of Finance in accordance with the law shall:- (a) prepare the annual budget of the Government and submit it to the Council of Ministers;(b) collect taxes and dues;(c) arrange for and control Government receipts and expenditures; d) organize, regulate and control the accounting procedure to be followed in all Departments of the Government;(e) collect and account for all revenue derived from land tax, tithes, monopoly dues, customs and excise duties and all Government taxes;(f) make the necessary arrangements by regulation or otherwise for the proper collection and bringing to account of all Government revenue; (g) ensure that proper protection is accorded to funds and property of the Government; (h) control all employees and officials of the Government in charge of Government stores;(i) administer all Government property which is not administered by another Department of State; (j) arrange for the minting of coins and notes required by the Government;(k) establish and control the State Bank and supervise other Banks; (l) control the transfer of credits, the rates of exchange, and the stock exchange and finally(m) negotiate loans, internal or external for or by the Government."

chapter, and the military budget were the burning questions of the day. As Yīlma was engaged greatly in this disconcerted relationship, he was also at the forefront in an effort to deal with it.⁷³⁵

The wish for a solution to this unpleasant relationship with the British among Ethiopian authorities seems to have begun long before although opportunities did not allow. Emperor Hailä Sīllassié's entry into Addis Ababa, in the words of Harold Marcus, "was a bittersweet moment: he was home, an emperor in a palace, but he was neither authoritative nor apparent sovereign".⁷³⁶ Emperor Hailä Sīllassé, however, "yielded significant freedom in economic matters in return for a four-year subvention of £3,250,000, and also agreed that there should be the closest cooperation between Ethiopian authorities and the British advisers."⁷³⁷ On the other hand, "in return for this progressively diminishing financial subsidy, British authorities in Ethiopia exercised fiscal control over the country."⁷³⁸ Though he enjoyed economic and political gains due to the January 1942 Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement, the Emperor remained "dissatisfied with the agreement's demeaning tone, the British presence in Ethiopian territory, and with London's control over finance."⁷³⁹ It is important to mention here that the Administration's chief General Sir Philip Mitchell "even wanted London to control all taxation and public expenditure, to have justice administered by British officers, and to keep the Ethiopian army subject to War Office command."⁷⁴⁰ In fact, British authorities seem to have been concerned deeply about almost all procedures in the Ministry of Finance.⁷⁴¹

⁷³⁵ Zāwdé Rāta, *Yäqāmawī Hailä-Sīllassé...*, 445-464; Spencer, 105; Amanda Kay Mcvety, "Pursuing Progress: Point Four in Ethiopia," *Diplomatic History*, 32, No. 3, (June 2008): 383-384.

⁷³⁶ Harold Marcus, *The Politics of...*, 9.

⁷³⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁷³⁸ Bahru, *A History of...*, 179.

⁷³⁹ Marcus, *The Politics of...*, 12.

⁷⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 10; Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement of 31st January 1942.

⁷⁴¹ Financial Adviser to Director General of Finance Dated 9th January, 1943, Folder No. B 2632-2683, *ŠM*, MOFED.

On the very date of Yilma's elevation to his new position, for instance, the Emperor and the British Financial Adviser had a conversation, among other issues, about how the money supplied by the British had been spent in the Army.⁷⁴² Probably not to involve himself in the intricacies of public finance, the Emperor responded to Stafford by suggesting that he should discuss this with Yilma Déréssa. The Emperor also said that, as soon as the general budget was ready he wished to approach the British Government for a grant to cover the cost of the Army. Stafford, on his part made his view clear that "as the military expenditure comprised the greater part of the national expenditure it was impossible to produce a budget without an agreed upon scheme for military expenditure. He forcefully opposed the idea of application for financial grant until the whole budget was complete in all its details, including the cost of military forces."⁷⁴³ Though a statement of 'Approved Budget Estimate for 1935' showing total expenditure of £ 2,464,282 was not received from the Council of Ministers until 8th May, 1943, Yilma had received, for instance, the sum of E.A.S. 5,000,000 in March 1943 from His Britannic Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary representing the fifth installment of the grant-in-aid payable to the imperial government under article IV of the Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement.⁷⁴⁴ Sometime before, on November 23rd 1943, he had also received the sum of EAS 7,500,000 as the fourth installment.⁷⁴⁵

Yet, Yilma had been receiving warning letters consecutively for three months since November 1942 from the financial adviser dealing especially with military expenditure. Stafford directly noted that it was his duty to give a written warning to notify that the finances of the country were

⁷⁴² Note of a Discussion with his Imperial Majesty on 9th November, 1942, By Colonel Stafford, Dated Novemebr 10, 1942, IES, 3691, G-51.

⁷⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁴ Yilma Déréssa to R.G. Howe, Dated 11th March 1943, Folder No. D 1782-1843, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁷⁴⁵ Letter of confirmation by Yilma Déréssa, Dated 23th November, 1942, Folder No. D 1782-1843, *ŠM*, MOFED.

drifting into disorder and that unless the question of the budget estimates was tackled realistically it would soon be too late to put any financial plan into operation. For instance Stafford reminded Yilma that he gave him a statement of the unsatisfactory revenue position and complained that there had been no improvements since he wrote it. By way of complaint, Stafford recalled that he gave Yilma notes on 4th and 5th December, 1942 that showed his opinion about the military expenditure and how unsound the budget estimate of the Ministry of War was. Yilma did not respond to neither of these notes. And in conclusion, Stafford forewarned of the inevitability of severe financial difficulties unless three interrelated measures were taken: "spending no more than it obtained, curtailing military expenditure drastically and approving and enforcing a rational expenditure budget to cover all government expenditure immediately."⁷⁴⁶

Regardless of their deteriorating official relationship, the financial adviser confirmed, the efficiency of the Ministry and the financial administration in Ethiopia were improved a little. Writing in May 1943, he complained of Yilma and others in the Ministry. He reported that advice from him was rarely asked and in those infrequent cases advices were usually ignored, 'unless it happened to fit in with what the Vice-Minister or those behind him, desired personal relationships were pleasant and there was no falling off in the courtesy and friendliness shown to the Advisory staff. Feeling unwilling to sit by and watch a good beginning fall into decay, Stafford tendered his resignation in December'.⁷⁴⁷ The British financial adviser kept on commenting on Yilma disapprovingly:

No Minister has yet been appointed but the Director General (Lij Yilma Deressa) was appointed Vice Minister on 9th November. This entitles him to be addressed as Excellency and to sit in the Council of Ministers. It is no great improvement upon the previous

⁷⁴⁶ F.E. Stafford to Yilma Déréssa, Dated 11th January, 1943, FO 371/35610.

⁷⁴⁷ Strictly Confidential Report, Financial Adviser's Office, Dated 21st May 1943, FO 371/35612.

*arrangement, as the Vice Minister is too young, and insufficiently decisive, to play the part which the Minister of Finance should play. All matters of any importance at all are referred to either the Minister of the Pen or the Emperor. There is small hope of strong financial administration until a resolute Minister is appointed. The muddle, insufficiency and delays in the Ministry did not diminish during the period of this report. Ato Minassie Lemma was translated to the post of Director General from Harar, but his undoubted ability was given small opportunity of producing results because of the unwillingness of the Vice Minister to delegate such responsibility as he is himself allowed.*⁷⁴⁸

Certainly, this statement tells more about the political system than an individual official like Yilma Déréssa. Given the political and economic circumstances of the period, it is no wonder that great power was exercised interchangeably by *Şāhafé Ti'izaz Wäldä Giorgis* and Emperor Hailä Sillassé.⁷⁴⁹ In conjunction with the unsettled financial conditions in Ethiopia, British authorities had also begun to complain of the *Şāhafé Ti'izaz* “that he had his hand on every control.”⁷⁵⁰

Perhaps after a discussion on the memorandum on extraordinary expenditure prepared by Stafford in mid February 1943,⁷⁵¹ Ethiopian authorities agreed to develop a general budget estimate by a commission and the emperor commanded Yilma to request *Şāhafé Ti'izaz Wäldä Giorgis* to inform the commission members having been selected for that purpose.⁷⁵² The commission consisted of seven members, namely *Ato Aklilu Häbtä Wäld* (president of the commission), Major Nāga Hailä Sillassé, Major Mulugeta, Major Khalid, Colonel Stafford, Birgadier Cottam and Colonel Sanford. However, a written document shows that the

⁷⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁹ Wäldä-Giyorgis Wäldä -Yohannīs rose to become one of the most powerful politicians in twentieth-century Ethiopia and the most important architect of Haile Sellassie's post-1941 government. Mekonnen, 91.

⁷⁵⁰ G Makereth to Gilbert, Dated 6th December, 1943, FO 371/35614.

⁷⁵¹ Memorandum on the Extraordinary Expenditure from Stafford Dated 17th February, 1943, IES, 3691, G-51. This memo also deposited in Folder No. D 1782-1843, *ŞM*, MOFED.

⁷⁵² On another occasion too, the emperor notified Yilma to inform the *Şāhafé Tizaz* to write a letter of appointment and a legal notice meant to be published on the *Negarit Gazeta*. Yilma Déréssa to the Ministry of Pen, Māgabiū 4, 1935 E.C, Folder No. A 5377-5446, *ŞM*, MOFED.

Commission did not sit until 21st May 1943 and no progress had been made in regulating Military expenditure.⁷⁵³

Yilma then asked *Ras Abäbä Arägay*, the Minister of War, for an immediate preparation of financial statement for the Army of the Ethiopian Government not more than one million MTD excluding the recurrent budget (personal emoluments). It seems plausible that this fund was an extraordinary grant from the British Government. In his “confidential” and “urgent” letter to *Ras Abäbä*, Yilma recommended that the budget should comprise expenses on armaments, transport, the construction of bridges and other miscellaneous costs. Reminding the *ras* that the total budget estimate of the Ministry of War so far was \$ 9, 000,000(\$4,000,000 for the Regular Army administered by the British Military Mission and the \$5,000,000 for Territorial Army under the Ministry of War), Yilma argued that out of the \$ 4, 000,000 budget estimate for a regular army, 75% was taken from the budget allocations of other Ministerial institutions. So as to run other governmental institutions, Yilma informed, the British government agreed to compensate the same amount of money that would be allocated to the army.⁷⁵⁴

Stafford’s memorandum on extraordinary expenditure and Yilma’s confidential letters to the Minister of War implied that both parties came to a temporary concurrence on the question of military expenditure at least in February and March 1943. As Stafford included a £ 30,000 (approximately \$ 315,000) for ‘Qobbo Operations’ in his memorandum, it would not be a far-

⁷⁵³ Yilma Déréssa to *Şāhafē Tiṭaz* Wäldä-Giorgis Wäldä-Yohannis, February 16, 1943, Folder No. B 2632-2683, *ŞM*, MOFED; Strictly Confidential Report from Financial Adviser’s Office, 21st May 1943, FO 371/35612.

⁷⁵⁴ Yilma Déréssa to *Ras Abäbä Arägay*, Yäkatit 11, 1935 E.C., Folder No. B 2632-2683, *ŞM*, MOFED.

fetches supposition that the Raya and Azäbo rebellion was an extremely important military and financial issue for Ethiopian and British authorities.⁷⁵⁵

Besides the British stringent handling of issues related to public finance in general and the military expenditure in particular, the currency situation in the country went from bad to worse, too. The British kept on their currency plan to the extent that they prepared designs for the new notes and the coins assisted by a local artist and the designs were sent to London towards the end of 1942.⁷⁵⁶

In January 1943, Stafford presented to Yilma Déréssa a new plan showing him how a currency based on Sterling could be issued and managed by State Bank of Ethiopia (SBE) without introducing a foreign currency board and suggesting that if the idea appealed to the Ethiopian government, the details could be worked out for presentation to the British government as an alternative arrangement. On January 16, 1943, the British “draconian measures seem to have mellowed the Ethiopian position. C.S. Collier and Yilma informed Stafford that the government has agreed to accept the currency plan and that a formal decision to this effect would be made by the Council of Ministers soon.”⁷⁵⁷

⁷⁵⁵ Gebru Tareke (1996) wrote that “ever since the eviction of the Italian colonialists in 1941, political discontent was evident throughout Tigrai. The transitional state was too weak to maintain ‘law and order,’ and the province became a haven for brigands who robbed and molested farmers and merchants. In Addis Ababa’s view, the Raya, Azebo, and Wajirat peoples were largely to blame for the ‘lawlessness’; it sought first to end the intercommoned raids and attendant civil strife in their areas. The making of the rebellion can be conveniently divided into three stages; From May 1943 to June 1943, the crisis escalates following the defeat of a governmental expeditionary force in Wajirat; June-September 1943, the government suffers several military setbacks against a coalition of bandits and dissidents. This sets the stage for the battle at Amba Alag and September-October 1943, the defeat of the dissident at Alage marks the collapse of the rebellion and the end of provincial autonomy. See Gebru, 105-107. Memorandum on the Extraordinary Expenditure from Stafford 17th February, 1943, IES, 3691, G-51. This memo also deposited in Folder No. D 1782-1843, ŠM, MOFED; Confidential letter from Anonymous to the Ministry of War, Yäkatit 17, 1935 E.C., Folder No. B 2632-2683, ŠM, MOFED.

⁷⁵⁶ Strictly Confidential Report from Financial Adviser’s Office, Dated 21st May 1943, FO 371/35612

⁷⁵⁷ Befekadu Degefe, “The Making of...”:29 and 30.

When nothing satisfying came from the Ethiopian government, the British ambassador in Addis Ababa notified the Emperor seriously that before any further Maria Theresa Thalers were supplied, the future currency arrangement for Ethiopia had to be definitely settled. If, Howe kept on in his words of warning, the currency board proposals recommended by His Majesty's Government are made effective; the payment of one quarter's subsidy in Maria Theresa Thalers instead of shillings will be arranged on terms to be decided. By way of conclusion, he stated that the British government would not agree to provide Maria Theresa Thalers unless this condition was fulfilled.⁷⁵⁸ Meanwhile, "in April 1943(almost a year after its establishment) the State Bank of Ethiopia opened its door for business in Addis Ababa with branches in Dire Dawa(May) and Dässé(August) the same year while a seven man Board of Directors including Yilma Déréssa was appointed to administer its affairs later on 30th June, 1943."⁷⁵⁹ The rest of Board Members were *Şāhafé Tī'az* Wäldä-Giorgis Wäldä-Yohannis(President), Mr. S.C. Collier, *Nägadras* Gäbrä İgziabhér, *Ato* Mäkonñin Dästa, Dr. Ambayé Wäldä-Mariam, and *Ato* Aklilu Häbtä-Wäld.⁷⁶⁰

Concurrently, the consul of USA at Asmara, Mr Talbot Smith visited Addis Ababa in September 1942 and it was a golden opportunity for the Emperor to approach the government of United States of America.⁷⁶¹ Before the end of 1942, the Emperor continued his effort to keep in touch with Washington via Asmara.⁷⁶² In his telegram to President Roosevelt, for instance, Emperor Hailä Sillassé expressed his "gratitude to the United States authorities for making Ethiopia

⁷⁵⁸ Howe to Emperor Hailä Sillassé, 3rd February 1943, Folder No. A 5158-5208, *ŞM*, MOFED.

⁷⁵⁹ Befekadu, "The Development of...", 238.

⁷⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 274.

⁷⁶¹ The Consul at Asmara (Smith) to the Secretary of State, 18th February, 1943, State Department, 884.24/112.1/2, <http://images.library.wisc.edu/FRUS/EFacs/1943v04/reference/frus.frus1943v04.i0008.pdf>.

⁷⁶² Commanded by Emperor Hailä Sillasse, Ephrem Täwäldä Mädhin, the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, sent a telegram to Talbot Smith, Washington's consul at Asmara, requesting him to convey the expression of his gratefulness to President Roosevelt for the announcement of lease and lend authorization to Ethiopia. Consul at Asmara (Smith) to the Secretary of State, 2nd January, 1943, State Department, 884.24/93.

eligible for lease-lend assistance.”⁷⁶³ He also invited Mr. Talbot Smith to visit him at Addis Ababa shortly in order to discuss fully lease-lend arrangements.⁷⁶⁴ Washington’s response was most gratifying for the emperor. Both the president and secretary of State promised, besides Smith’s trip to Addis Ababa, that USA was considering the reopening of the legation in Ethiopia.⁷⁶⁵ “When a preliminary mission was dispatched to see to the details, the emperor took the opportunity to transmit an *aide-memoire* to the General defining his problems and aspirations.”⁷⁶⁶ During the last conversation he had had with the envoy, the Emperor stated that he would like to see President Roosevelt and put his views before him. In the meantime, the monarch informed them that he would like to send a representative to the USA General Maxwell referred, by way of caution, to the difficulties of communications and shipping against expecting too prompt action.⁷⁶⁷

In this historical development of diplomacy, the part of the narrative relevant to the subject at hand is of course an account of Yilma Déréssa’s mission to U.S.A. in May 1943. The trip to Hot Spring, Virginia was “ostensibly to participate in an international conference on food, but in reality to negotiate a lend-lease agreement.”⁷⁶⁸ Yilma’s personal aptitude and training seem to

⁷⁶³ Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled on 11th March 1941, this Act may be cited as “An Act to Promote the Defense of the United States”. It is also known as H.R.1776.

⁷⁶⁴ The Consul at Asmara (Smith) to the Secretary of State, 6th January, 1943, State Department, 4.24/95

⁷⁶⁵ The Secretary of State to the Consul at Asmara (Smith), 18th January, 1943 State Department, 884.24/93; The Secretary of State to the Consul at Asmara (Smith), 26th January, 1943 State Department, 884.24/95.

⁷⁶⁶ Marcus, *The Politics of* 16; The Consul at Asmara (Smith) to the Secretary of State, 18th February, 1943, State Department, 884.24/112,1/2.

⁷⁶⁷ Report of Statement Made by His Imperial Majesty, Haile Selassie, On the Afternoon of February 11, 1943. To General Maxwell, Colonel Edwin N. Clark and E. Talbot Smith in Telegram from the Consul at Asmara (Smith) to the Secretary of State, 18th February, 1943, State Department, 884.24/112,1/2.

⁷⁶⁸ Marcus, *The Politics of* 18.

have been considered in the decision to make him a chief delegate of Ethiopian government to the conference.⁷⁶⁹

Though the conference was to be held from May 18 to June 3, 1943, Yilma traveled to USA earlier (sometime before May 8). Interestingly, as there was a problem in the currency reserve of US dollars at the central treasury(*Ṭāqlay Gīmṣ bét*) of the Ministry of Finance, Yilma had to collect, in addition to 2,000 East African Shillings, 1,000 gold guineas from “His Majesty’s Special Treasury” to cover the travel and other expenses of Yilma and *liṣ* Bīrhanu Tāsāma.⁷⁷⁰ The travel through the Atlantic ocean is said to be dangerous as a result of the the Second World War.⁷⁷¹ It appears that the Emperor had personal treasury until 1949 different from the State Treasury under the authority of Gäbrä Mariam Amānté.

Yilma, together with *Ato* Araya Abābā and *liṣ* Bīrhanu Tāsāma, conversed with three American delegated on 15th May, 1943 in Washington on matters regarding lend-lease assistance to Ethiopia. At this moment Yilma presented a full power authorizing him to conclude with this Government any lend-lease agreement and to sign on behalf of the Ethiopian Government everything so agreed upon.⁷⁷² Then he was given a copy of the usual form of representations required by Section 4 and 7 of the Act, and he agreed to prepare and submit these preparations.⁷⁷³ It was then explained that the text of a master lend-lease agreement was in

⁷⁶⁹ Zäwdé Rāta, *Yä’qādamawi Hailä-Sillasse...*, 447-453.

⁷⁷⁰ Yilma Déréssa to Central Treasury of the Ministry of Finance, Hidar 10, 1941 E.C.; Personal File of Yilma Déréssa, HO, MOFED; Anonymous to the Ministry of Pen, Miazia 29 1935 E.C., Personal File of Yilma Déréssa, HO, MOFED; Letter from Prime Minister to the Minister of Finance, Dated Tahsas 1, 1941, Personal File of Yilma Déréssa, HO, MOFED.

⁷⁷¹ Informant: Bā’idā Mariam Mäkonīn

⁷⁷² Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Vernon L. Phelps of the Division of Commercial Policy and Agreements, May 15 1943, Department of State, 884.24/107.

⁷⁷³ Section four of the Act approved on 11 March 1941 endorsed that “all contracts or agreements made for the disposition of any defense article or defense information pursuant to section 3 shall contain a clause by which the foreign government undertakes that it will not, without the consent of the President, transfer title to or possession of such defense article or defense information by gift, sale, or otherwise, or permit its use by anyone not an officer.

preparation and that it would probably be ready for his consideration upon Yilma's return to Washington from the Food Conference in Hot Spring, Virginia.⁷⁷⁴

On his arrival in the United States, besides the preliminary negotiations on the lend-lease agreements, Yilma had said that the Ethiopian Government desires to obtain the services of six road experts and a financial adviser. He also pointed out the urgent need of the Ethiopian Government for radio equipment, as it was unable to communicate with the outside world except through the British Legation at Addis Ababa. He also requested a household physician for the Emperor.⁷⁷⁵

Back to Washington from Virginia in early June, Yilma and Bırhanu met US Secretary of State Cordell Hull on July 7. During their brief conversation with him they expressed their complete satisfaction with the proceedings and the results of the conference, saying that the entire period of the conference was very interesting and very enjoyable and that they believed it would prove thoroughly profitable.⁷⁷⁶ During his stay at Hot Spring, meanwhile, Yilma had met Professor Lionel C. Robbins, his economics lecturer at the London School of Economics and Political Science.⁷⁷⁷

employee, or agent of such foreign government. Section seven also stated that the Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Navy, and the head of the department or agency shall in all contracts or agreements for the disposition of any defense article or defense information fully protect the rights of all citizens of the United States who have patent rights in and to any such article or information which is hereby authorized to be disposed of and the payments collected for royalties on such patents shall be paid to the owners and holders of such patents." An Act to Promote the Defense of the United States, 11th March, 1941, <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=71&page=transcript>. Accessed on 11th November, 2014.

⁷⁷⁴ Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Vernon L. Phelps of the Division of Commercial Policy and Agreements, May 15, 1943, Department of State, 884.24/107.

⁷⁷⁵ Memorandum by the Liaison Officer with the War and Navy Departments (Wilson), 18th May, 1943, Department of State, 884.24/110.

⁷⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷⁷ Yilma Déréssa to Professor Lionel C. Robbins, 2nd January 1946, Folder No. A 6042-6070, *SM*, MOFED.

The delegates also raised the problem of Seaport that confronted Ethiopia and expressed their hope that USA would aid them in securing the right to such port. They also informed him that Ethiopian Government desired to send an ambassador to Washington. Hull found this “an interesting bit of information and that he would give it attention in due course.”⁷⁷⁸ Yilma and Bīrhanu also raised the issue of a letter from the Emperor to the President Roosevelt. Hull informed them that “USA Government Protocol Division would send it to the President and, if possible, arrange for a conference.”⁷⁷⁹ The next day, Yilma, accompanied by *Ato Araya Abābā*, engaged in a relatively detail conversation with USA military and civilian officials. The purpose of the meeting was to assist Yilma “to discuss with the appropriate officials of the Army Ethiopian Government desire to obtain arms and munitions of war under Lend-Lease.”⁷⁸⁰ As the liaison officer reported:

*During the conversation Mr. Deressa stated that his Government desired to obtain arms and equipment sufficient for three divisions. It appears that this equipment would include trucks and light tanks. Each Ethiopian division consists of approximately 12,000 men. When asked what need the Ethiopian Government had for a military organization of this size Mr. Deressa answered that it would be necessary to maintain internal order over an area of 350,000 square miles, and if necessary, to lend assistance to the other United Nations if called upon to do so. When asked how the Ethiopian forces could be trained in the use of this armament he stated that a British Military Mission is already in Ethiopia and that, if necessary, an American mission could be engaged.*⁷⁸¹

Though Yilma revealed his proposal compellingly, the immediate response from American delegate was not encouraging. Colonel Johnson, for example, “came back with that three divisions constituted a considerable force and that there was no surplus equipment in the United

⁷⁷⁸ Memorandum by the Liaison Officer with the War and Navy Departments(Wilson), 18th May, 1943, Department of State, 884.24/110.

⁷⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁰ Memorandum of Conversation, by the Liaison Officer(Wilson) July 8 1943, Department of State, 884.24/109

⁷⁸¹ *Ibid.*

States which could be supplied.”⁷⁸² As impatient as Yīlma had been with regard to the military assistance that Ethiopia was expecting from USA, reports imply, “US officials were equally concerned with the endorsement of the Lend-Lease agreement before the supply of any military aid.”⁷⁸³

It appears that Yīlma, for his mission to the USA, had prepared two memoranda-one for President Roosevelt and the other for Mr. Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State. However, it was notified that “the memorandum handed to the latter was missing from Department files.”⁷⁸⁴ Referring to the missing document which Yīlma considered as his initial agenda, he wrote a letter to Hull on 12th July that dealt with the desire of Ethiopian government to secure loan from USA. The loan, Yīlma wrote, which the Ethiopian Government desired to secure was intended to be used for the rehabilitation of the country. Among the outstanding items for which the loan was requested were:”rehabilitation of agriculture, repair and maintenance of roads, bridges and other means of communication, to finance existing industries and to secure the service of American experts to operate these industries, to develop mines and in general to improve the economic condition of the country.”⁷⁸⁵ Attached with his letter, he presented a plain statement on the amount of loan and credit requested by the Ethiopian Government. Hence, he requested \$ 40,000,000 credit to be made available in the United States in cash balance and to purchase consumers goods. “The remaining \$ 10,000,000 was applied for silver loan under Lend-Lease. The credit may be supplied over a period, the terms and conditions of which to be specified.”⁷⁸⁶

⁷⁸² *Ibid.*

⁷⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁴ Yīlma Déréssa to Cordell Hull, 12th July 1943, Department of State, 884.51/66.

⁷⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁶ Enclosure by Yīlma Déréssa on Statement of Amount of Loan and Credit Requested by The Ethiopian Government, Dated 12th July 1943. Department of State, 884.51/67.

The silver loan appears to address the problem of new currency in the country. As to the monetary situation, Yilma briefed Hull that “it was not less preoccupying compared to other socio-economic conditions in Ethiopia. Lack of subsidiary money and fluctuation of the exchange rate between the Maria Theresa Thelar and the British East African pound had created currency problems.”⁷⁸⁷

Next day in the afternoon, Yilma had got a second opportunity to speak to President Franklin Roosevelt in the White House. The first encounter was on June 7 when the president gave a reception for the delegates to the United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture in Virginia.⁷⁸⁸ During the course of an interview on July 13 Yilma was able to hand his *Aide-Memoire* to the president. President Roosevelt referred this memo to the Secretary of State with the following comment: “I think this is extremely interesting. Will you talk to me about it?”⁷⁸⁹ Accordingly, the Secretary of State reflected his view and opinion later on.⁷⁹⁰

Having discussed about the contemporary political and socio-economic situations of Ethiopia, Yilma’s memo, consisted of some ten paragraphs, applied for USA crucial assistance. As to the global political significance as well as implication of Ethiopia’s struggle against Axis domination, he noted that “every Ethiopian believed that our country, freed from the yoke of Axis domination, would serve as a beacon of encouragement to other countries temporarily overrun. The brave Chinese, the Czechs, the Poles, the Norwegians, the Dutch, the peoples of

⁷⁸⁷ Yilma Déréssa to Cordell Hull, 12th July 1943, Department of State, 884.51/66.

⁷⁸⁸ On this occasion Yilma handed to the president the Emperor’s letter of April 30, 1943 and His Majesty’s photograph in the ‘beautiful’ frame. Letter from President Roosevelt to the Emperor of Ethiopia (Haile Selassie), 22nd June 1943, Department of State, 884.24/112

⁷⁸⁹ Aide-Memoire from Yilma Déréssa to President Roosevelt, 13th July 1943, Department of State, 884.00/7-1443

⁷⁹⁰ Cordell Hull to Franklin D. Roosevelt, 2nd August, 1943, Department of State, 884.014/7-2043.

East Indies could all take heart upon seeing Ethiopia freed and her people aided in the restoration of their land.”⁷⁹¹ Towards his conclusion, he wrote that:

*His Imperial Majesty will be glad to have American citizens to advise him in financial, military, judicial, and other technical affairs. His Imperial Majesty will welcome the cooperation of American capital and technical skill to help develop the natural resources of his country. It is further the feeling of His Imperial Majesty that Ethiopia can be of aid in supplying foodstuffs to needy European and Eastern nations during the post war period of reconstruction. If help could now be given her in the form of technical aid and equipment, the temperate climate and fertile soil in the highlands of our country would lend themselves favorably to the production of important crops and cattle for food. Ethiopia would have the advantage of being much nearer to the needy territories than America, thereby effecting a saving in transportation and time. The people of Ethiopia are anxious to join with the people of the United States in their magnificent effort to rebuild a war-torn world.*⁷⁹²

The responses of President Roosevelt and the Secretary of the State to the *Aide-Memoire* were encouraging, if not gratifying. As to the request for the financial assistance, Hull recommended that “in principle, State Department was disposed to support the extension of financial aid to Ethiopia, in order to assist the country in restoring its economy and thereby contributed in a greater degree to the war effort, although it might be impractical to make a loan in the amount requested(40 Millions US Dollars).”⁷⁹³ As a first step in the consideration of this, in so far as to it related to possible financial assistance through the Export-Import Bank, a conference was called for the purpose of discussing with Yilma such details as might be necessary precedent to a farther exploration of the subject.⁷⁹⁴ After a while, the conversation with Yilma was held and suggestion was made that “he, in cooperation with Blowers, had to, on his return to Ethiopia,

⁷⁹¹ Aide-Memoire from Yilma Déréssa to Roosevelt, 13th July 1943, Department of State, 884.00/7-1443.

⁷⁹² Aide-Memoire from Yilma Déréssa to President Roosevelt, 13th July 1943, Department of State, 884.00/7-1443.

⁷⁹³ Cordell Hull to President Roosevelt, 2nd August, 1943, Department of State, 884.014/7-2043.

⁷⁹⁴ Cordell Hull to the President of the Export-Import Bank(Pierson), August 4, 1943, Department of State, 884.51/66.

prepare a more precise statement of the requirements of Ethiopia falling within the field of the Export-Import Bank's operation."⁷⁹⁵

The subsequent conversations and meetings between the Ethiopian and USA authorities were culminated in the signing of the 'Mutual Aid Agreement'.⁷⁹⁶ Signed on 9 August 1943, the Agreement represented a watershed in Ethiopian diplomatic, social, and economic history. It "was planned in Addis Ababa, agreed to by Washington, and condoned by London."⁷⁹⁷

Meanwhile, as per the request of Yilma, State Department's efforts to obtain the name of an American who might serve Ethiopian Government as legal adviser appear to have been successful. Mr. John H. Spencer whose expertise was first needed for the forthcoming Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement in January 1944, had agreed to accept the position, subject to his release from the United States armed forces, where he was then serving.⁷⁹⁸ "Yilma was also able to obtain the services of George A. Blowers, former governor of the Bank of Monrovia, Liberia, who also had long banking experience in Nanking and Shanghai-as adviser in the negotiations with Treasury on the currency loans."⁷⁹⁹ As a result, Blowers replaced Collier as governor of State Bank of Ethiopia.⁸⁰⁰ He, therefore, led the State Bank of Ethiopia during its formative years in 1940s. Blowers brought some of his former colleagues to work in the State Bank of Ethiopia.⁸⁰¹ "The first one was Kedrick W. Brown from Monrovia and later Mr. V.C.

⁷⁹⁵ Memorandum of conversation, by Mr. Charles W. Lewis of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, Dated August 5, 1943, Department of State, 884.51/8-543.

⁷⁹⁶ The Agreement appears to be known as Department of State Executive Agreement Series No.334, or 57stat.(pt.2) 1043. The details of the agreement are not available. Letter from the Secretary of State to the Vice Minister of Finance (Yilma Déréssa), 12th August, 1943, Department of State, 884.24/142a. Befekadu, "The Making of ...":40.

⁷⁹⁷ Marcus, *The Politics of...* 21.

⁷⁹⁸ *Aide-Memoire* from Yilma Déréssa) to President Roosevelt, 13th July 1943, Department of State, 884.00/7-1443. Cordell Hull to Yilma Déréssa, 12th August, 1943, Department of State, 884.24/142a; Spencer, 105.

⁷⁹⁹ Spencer, 105.

⁸⁰⁰ Confidential letter from G. Mackereth to Gilbert, Dated 6th December 1943, FO 371/35614.

⁸⁰¹ Taffara, 78.

Prall was brought from New York as manager in Addis Ababa. The years 1943-1960 were a period of full expatriate management of the Bank.”⁸⁰²

Nonetheless, Blowers’ resignation from his previous position disappointed B.H. Larrabee, the vice-president of Firestones Plantations Company and he had endeavored to dissuade him from doing so. Mr. Blowers felt that the opportunities for him in Liberia were limited, and he desired to accept larger opportunity now offered him in Ethiopia.⁸⁰³

Yilma returned from his mission on 26th August, 1943 and arrived at Addis Ababa with Mr. John Caldwell, the first USA minister to Ethiopia after liberation. As decisive as the trip had been, the native press chronicled Yilma’s homecoming as one of the prime news.⁸⁰⁴ In fact, in the literature too, the 1943 mission is considered as a defining moment for the reinstatement of the Ethio-American diplomacy. More specifically, the trip resulted in eventual total of US \$ 5,152,000 U.S. Lend-Lease assistance.⁸⁰⁵

Collier, the former manager of the State Bank of Ethiopia, appears to be upset by the manner in which he came to realize his replacement. He thought, according to a British document, that “the Ethiopians, and particularly Yilma Déréssa, who saw him for several days between his return from Hot Springs and Collier’s departure for India, behaved badly in telling him nothing about Blowers, whom Yilma himself engaged in America.”⁸⁰⁶ The first manager of the State Bank of Ethiopia, “who by now had lost the confidence of the Emperor, was deliberately kept in the dark.

⁸⁰² *Ibid.*, 79.

⁸⁰³ Memorandum of Conversation by Mr. Charles W. Lewis of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, June 22, 1943, Department of State, 884.516/15

⁸⁰⁴ *Addis Zāmān*: Nāhasé 22, 1935 E.C.

⁸⁰⁵ Mevety, 383.

⁸⁰⁶ G. Mackereth to Gilbert, 6th December 1943, FO 371/35614.

It was not until early November that the British confirmed Blowers appointment. A few days before the official announcement, Yılma told Stafford about it.”⁸⁰⁷

British authorities couldn't help reporting on Yılma's prolonged stay in the United States of America, i.e., from early May to late August 1943. When Stafford wrote about the condition of the Ministry of Finance, he noted:

*During the delegation of the Vice-Minister to America and other absences, the work of the Ministry devolved on the Director General of Finance. This again placed the Ministry in an inferior position in the Council of Ministers. This has been a severe handicap as the voice of the Ministry has not been properly heard in the Councils of State. In the present stage of development each Ministry is a Government in itself, always fighting for its own hand, and the conception of Government as a co-ordinate whole finds no acceptance. With money running short, the Ministry of Finance is generally regarded as an obstacle in the way of progress and the constant attendance of a strong Minister is essential.*⁸⁰⁸

Seen from the *de jure* powers and responsibilities of the Council of Ministers, this appears to be approximately correct. Yet, my key informants strongly argue that the voice from the authorities of the Ministry of Finance was listened to considerably in the palace.⁸⁰⁹

Soon after, as per the Mutual Aid Agreement, Yılma and the new Washington Minister to Addis Ababa talked about the issue of Ethiopian battalion to join the forces of the United Nation forces on any of their fronts. The Ethiopian Government was informed that the Ethiopian troops could not be accepted, as there was no place for them in the forces of the United Nations. Meanwhile, Yılma informed Caldwell that the offer of the Ethiopian Government to contribute to the war effort under the Allied forces was made a year ago (before the Lend-Lease agreement) through

⁸⁰⁷ Befekadu, “The Making of ...”:41

⁸⁰⁸ Report by Financial Adviser for the Period 1st April to November 30, 1943, December 27, 1943, IES, MS 3691, G-51.

⁸⁰⁹ Informants: Bulča Dāmāqsa, Asfaw Damtē and Tādla Tāšomä.

the British Ambassador at Addis Ababa. Nevertheless, it was answered in September 1943 that the offer could not be accepted unless the British Military Mission were retained in Ethiopia. Claiming that the then system was not satisfactory to Ethiopia because it gave excess authority to the British Military Mission, the Ethiopian Government preferred to have the mission replaced by Military Advisers attached to the Ministry of War, and paid by, and under the control of, the Ethiopian Government as in the case of the British advisors to various government departments at that time.⁸¹⁰

Returning then, to the new currency issue, “by 1944, it was ready for issue but two subsidiary problems forced a delay. The first was the 1942 Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement which was still in force and required the consent of the British Government in anything relating to currency.”⁸¹¹ As early as July 1943, however, “the British Ambassador in Washington informed the Foreign Office of the fact that the US was negotiating with the Ethiopian Government regarding appointment of a US banker as Governor of State Bank of Ethiopia. This information was passed to Ambassador Howe in Addis for confirmation.”⁸¹² However, with their Currency plan still on offer, it was clear that the British would not have consented to the making and issue of the new currency. The agreement was renegotiated and a new convention governing the relationship between the two countries was signed on 19th December 1944. This restored full and complete sovereignty to Ethiopia. However, before the agreement was signed in December, the preparation was done to mint the new Ethiopian currency in USA in October 1944.⁸¹³ The second one “concerned the payment of US \$200,000 to cover the cost of manufacturing the

⁸¹⁰ J.K. Caldwell to the Secretary of State, 21st October, 1943, Department of State, 740.0011 European War 1939/31888.

⁸¹¹ Befekadu, “The Development...,” 245.

⁸¹² Befekadu, “The Making of...”: 41.

⁸¹³ Hickman Price Jr. to Yilma Déréssa, September 8 1944, Folder No. D 4084-4185, *ŠM*, MOFED.

currency to the National City Bank of New York.”⁸¹⁴ Having encountered problems related to foreign exchange, Ethiopia needed Britain’s exchange control clearance for payments outside the sterling zone. “The Ethiopian Government applied for the use of US \$ 350,000 for the purchase of textile, a commodity hard to get from the sterling zone then. The permission was granted and the fund was transferred to the Bank. The cost of engraving, minting, and printing the new currency was paid out of this fund.”⁸¹⁵

Documents at the Ministry of Finance reveal that U.S. Lend-Lease assistance in Ethiopia was facilitated by the Foreign Economic Administration (FEA) from its offices at Washington and Cairo. The administration was said to be a precursor of the Agency for International Development.⁸¹⁶ Hence, Yilma and his associates at the Ministry of Finance and the State Bank of Ethiopia worked directly with FEA and indirectly with “its agent in the region, the American Eastern Corporation Near East Division.”⁸¹⁷

Ethiopian government sources shed light on the financial settlement of about US \$ 4,804,184 out of the total aid of US \$ 5,152, 000 under the Lend-Lease agreement. Under the general heading of Lend-Lease, there were two distinct obligations. One was a commodity loan, consisting of war material and copper coins, and the other was a silver loan, consisting of 30 million pieces of Ethiopian 50 ¢ coins. Of this total Lend-Lease aid given to Ethiopia, about US \$ 1,496, 036 went for military equipment and copper coins. The remaining, yet the better part of the aid went to the

⁸¹⁴ Befekadu, “The Development...”246

⁸¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸¹⁶ Marcus, *The Politics of...*27.

⁸¹⁷ K.C. Lauter to Yilma Déréssa, September 5 and October 2, 1944; A.G. James to Yilma Déréssa, September 14 and 20 1944 Hickman Price Jr. to Yilma Déréssa, October 5 1944; Folder No. D 4084-4185, *SM*, MOFED.

commodity items (US \$ 1,042,072), copper coins (US \$ 3,459, 57) and silver coins (US \$ 3,308,147).⁸¹⁸

Under the Lend-Lease arrangements, since September 1944 to April 1945 Yilma and his associates at the Ministry of Finance had engaged closely in importing and making use of stationary logistics (35 metric tons of paper for *Mārha Ṭibāb* Printing House), Cigarette papers for Tobacco Monopoly, 5 Dodge trucks and other motor cars for Ethiopian government that had been delivered through American Easter Corporations which was an agent of FEA.⁸¹⁹ It is important to emphasize here that the *Mārha Ṭibāb* Printing House was an important institution that the government effectively utilized for the implementation of its policy of fiscal centralization by printing receipts and other financial documents.

⁸¹⁸ Foreign Contractual Obligations of Ethiopia, Not Dated, Folder No. C 718-749, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁸¹⁹ K.C. Lauter to Yilma Déréssa, September 5 and October 2, 1944; A.G. James to Yilma Déréssa, September 14 and 20, 1944, Hickman Price Jr. to Yilma Déréssa, October 5, 1944; Folder No. D 4084-4185, *ŠM*, MOFED.



Figure 6. Märha Ṭibāb Printing House.

Probably to make its financial assistance economically justifiable, the United States Treasury Department sent a list of questions to the Ministry of Finance in July 1945 on Ethiopian financial matters of interest to the United States. The questions aimed mainly at identifying statistical figures with regards to the Ethiopian economy.⁸²⁰ In response to these questions, sources show,

⁸²⁰ The Treasury inquired for data especially on the current position of Ethiopia in world trade particularly its balance of payments, the country's current obligations to make payments on foreign loans, a plan of Ethiopia to finance her deficit on world account, Ethiopia's current position with respect to her holdings of foreign exchange (East African Shillings), gold, and other precious metals, Ethiopia's plan for utilizing the International Monetary Fund after its establishment, Ethiopia's proposal to use US dollars available, prices of goods in the country, data on the production of goods usually exported, the current rate of gold and other precious metals production in Ethiopia, Ethiopia's plan to establish an exchange control. Questions on Ethiopian Financial Matters interest to The United States Treasury from Division of Monetary Research, 14th July, 1945, Folder No. D1782-1843, ŠM, MOFED.

rough data from the Ministry of Finance were compiled and sent repeatedly via telegram to Washington later in November 1946.⁸²¹

For the minting and introduction of a new monetary unit to be called the Ethiopian dollar to be repaid in kind at the end of five years, initially it was 1.5 million ounces of silver that the United States Government granted. The requested silver (and granted eventually) rose to 5,430,000 ounces (approximately US \$ 3,459, 57).⁸²² This silver was needed “to be minted into half dollars [Ethiopian 50 ¢ coins] and swapped for the Maria Theresa Thelars.”⁸²³ In doing so, in “August 1943, the Ethiopian government had finalized arrangements for the manufacturing of the currency, but they continued to play the negotiating game with the British.”⁸²⁴ Likewise, the United States Government announced that it was prepared to give the silver loan as requested by Yilma in October 1943. The American Government planned to mint the coin in USA.⁸²⁵

Yilma and other Bank authorities of the Ethiopian government expected the receipt of the new Ethiopian currency some months before its actual circulation in July 1945. However, Yilma was informed that “the heavy demands of the United States Mint had made it impossible until September 1944 to commence the minting of the new Ethiopian 50-cent pieces and it was expected to commence in October, 1944.”⁸²⁶ It was understood that the costs of minting and shipping the coin to Addis Ababa would be paid for by the Government of Ethiopia. There was a

⁸²¹ The Ministry of Finance to Ethiopian Legation at Washington, November 1, 1946, Folder No. A 6071-6107, *ŠM*, MOFED; Ethiopian Legation at Washington to the Ministry of Finance, November 9 1946, Folder No. A 6071-6107, *ŠM*, MOFED; Ethiopian Legation at Washington to the Ministry of Finance, October 25, 1946, Folder No. A 6071-6107, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁸²² Spencer, 106.

⁸²³ Befekadu, “The Development of...,” 245; Acting Secretary of State to the Ministry in Ethiopia (Caldwell), October 23 1943, Department of State, 884.515/34c.

⁸²⁴ Befekadu, “The Making of...,” 40-41.

⁸²⁵ Foreign Contractual Obligations of Ethiopia, Not Dated, Folder No. C 718-749, *ŠM*, MOFED; Acting Secretary of State to the Minister in Egypt (Kirk), October 23, 1943, Department of State, 884.515/34d.

⁸²⁶ This notice was written by the Middle East representative of Foreign Economic Administration (FEA) at Cairo. Hickman Price Jr. to Yilma Déréssa, September 8 1944 Folder No. D 4084-4185, *ŠM*, MOFED.

plan that the coin would be shipped to the US Legation at Addis Ababa for delivery to the Ethiopian Government.⁸²⁷

Besides the Lend-Lease aid to mint the new Ethiopian currency, years later, there was a loan agreement between the Government of Ethiopia and the National City Bank of New York. To finance the manufacture and shipment of more than 6 million Ethiopian 50 ¢ coins an agreement of loan of up to US \$ 900,000 was signed on January 14, 1947 with the National City Bank of New York at 3 ½% interest. The Bank, a report indicated, in the same month purchased for account of the State Bank of Ethiopia more than 1 million ounces of silver at a cost of US \$ 818,000 and shipped it to the United States Mint for manufacture into coins. The entire principal was repaid the same year. Cost of minting, packing, insurance and handling to point export amounted to US \$ 56,548 and ocean freight and insurance to Djibouti was U.S. \$ 13,096 making a grand total of U.S. \$ 888,123.⁸²⁸ After some twenty months the new currency was made ready for use. Taffara narrated:

*The Emperor's birthday on July 23 was chosen as the date for the introduction of the new Ethiopian Dollar currency. Both the Bank notes and coins, made in the United States, were received enthusiastically by the city people. The new national currency was replacing the much favored Maria Theresa Silver Thaler and the East African Shilling that had circulated widely since the arrival of the British troops in 1941. These were very busy times at the State Bank of Ethiopia. Bank officers had to go to Djibouti to escort the shipment.*⁸²⁹

As for three years estimated supply, the State Bank of Ethiopia had on hand 30 million coins of 50 ¢, 10 million coins of 25 ¢, 25 million coins of 10 ¢, 16 million coins of 05 ¢, 15 million coins of 01 ¢. The value of these coins, therefore, amounted to nearly 21 million Ethiopian Birr. The

⁸²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁸ Foreign Contractual Obligations of Ethiopia, Not Dated, Folder No. C 718-749, ŠM, MOFED; Acting Secretary of State to the Minister in Egypt(Kirk), October 23, 1943, Department of State, 884.515/34d.

⁸²⁹ Taffara Deguef, 78-79.

greater amount of currency, however, was issued in paper money(63 million) with the following ratio: 8 million notes of 1 birr, 3 million notes of 5 birr, 3 million birr of 10 birr, 100 thousand notes of 50 birr, 10 thousand notes of 100 birr and 8 thousand notes of 500 birr. During nearly two months since the currency law came into effect⁸³⁰, the State Bank had issued Eth \$ 11.5 million in notes and about 5 million in coins.⁸³¹

The State Bank of Ethiopia held in reserve against the note issue 100% cover in sterling deposits in London and East African Currency notes in its vaults. At the moment the State Bank of Ethiopia was receiving between 150,000 and 200,000 shillings per day in exchange for the new currency. As regards the Maria Theresa Dollars, Gresham's Law was operating and this currency had gone to the ground. Practically, none of it was being offered in exchange for the new dollar. Financial authorities expected to overcome this difficulty either when import goods would become or when there would be a substantial drop in the price of silver.⁸³² Documents at the National Archive indicate that the problem with the Maria Theresa Dollar was serious, for instance in Wällo Province, that the Emperor personally wrote a letter to the Crown Prince to implement duly the 'Currency and Legal Tender Proclamation of 1945'. Though the Currency proclamation outlawed the Maria Theresa Dollar as a legal tender within Ethiopia and attempted to consider it legally as commodity, practical conditions obliged the state to convert one Maria Theresa Thelar to three East African Shillings through the Chamber of Commerce.⁸³³

⁸³⁰ It came into force as from 23rd July, 1945. *Negarit Gazeta* 4th Year No. 9, Article 11 of the Currency and Legal Tender Proclamation No. 76 of 1945.

⁸³¹ Ethiopian Currency, Not Dated, Folder No. A 6042-6070, *SM*, MOFED.

⁸³² *Ibid.*

⁸³³ Emperor Hailä Sillassé to Crown Prince Asfä Wäsän, October 11 1946 and December 16 1946, File No. 102, Folder No. 2.2.73.02, NALA; *Negarit Gazeta*, 4th Year No. 9., Currency and Legal Tender Proclamation No. 76 of 1945, *Negarit Gazeta* 4th Year No. 9.

Generally, in the course of issuing and minting of the Ethiopian new currency, Yilma and other authorities (*Ato* Minasé Lämama, Mr. George Blowers and Mr. John Spencer) were overseeing the manufacturing, shipping and preliminary circulation processes closely. Though difficult to mark out Yilma's individual role in this historical development, documents at the Ministry show that he had been authorizing the minting of notes and coins in the United States Mint at Philadelphia. Furthermore, he was occupied with issues related to the silver market in the USA, the shipment of Maria Theresa Dollars from Ethiopia to USA to melt down for the manufacturing of new currency, and US dollar loan needed for the currency exchange. To this end, Yilma sent and received letters and telegrams of authorization and report most often in the form of telegraphs since September 1944 most often via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ethiopian Legation at Washington.⁸³⁴

Besides the key role that Yilma played in the development of Ethiopian national currency, of course, with the remarkable assistance of the United States Government, what makes his 1943 trip to the United States important is that it did pave the way for the intensification of American involvement in the Ethiopian political and socio-economic activities in the 1950s and 1960s. Besides the material and financial assistance, as Bahru noted, “ the US response to the 1943 envoy came in the form of sending of a technical mission in May 1944. The latter, known as the

⁸³⁴Hickman Price Jr. to Yilma Déréssa, September 8 1944 Folder No. D 4084-4185, *ŠM*, MOFED; Yilma Déréssa to George Blowers, April 8 and 15, May 13 and 24, June 19, 1946, and January 11, 1947 Folder No. A 6071-6107, *ŠM*, MOFED; Yilma Déréssa to the Ethiopian Legation at Washington, January 21, March 3, March 7 and April 15, May 8, 1947, Folder No. A 6071-6107, *ŠM*, MOFED; John Spencer to Yilma and Blowers, January 5, 1947, Folder No. A 6071-6107, *ŠM*, MOFED; Spencer to Yilma Déréssa, January 10, 1947, Folder No. A 6071-6107, *ŠM*, MOFED; Ethiopian Legation at Washington to the Ministry of Finance, January 18, and April 15, 1947, Folder No. A 6071-6107, *ŠM*, MOFED; The Ministry of Pen to the Ministry of Finance, April 16, 1947, Folder No. A 6071-6107, *ŠM*, MOFED. Richard Leach to Yilma Déréssa, May 28, 1945, D 4084-4185 *ŠM*, MOFED; Yilma Deressa to Richard Leach, March 12, 1945 D 4084-4185 *ŠM*, MOFED (See Appendix VI and VII).

Fellows mission (after its leader, Perry Fellows), could be said to have laid the ground work for the subsequent American involvement in Ethiopia.”⁸³⁵

During his conversations with President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull, Yilma stated that the Emperor of Ethiopia was anxious to arrange for the sending of three missions, in particular a highway engineering mission, an agricultural mission and a minerals mission. To these three a fourth was added when the Ethiopian Government requested that a medical mission also would be sent. However, it was eventually decided that their functions were so interrelated that the mission should be consolidated under a single administrator or chief of Mission, hence Fellows Mission.⁸³⁶ Mr. Perry Fellows, Assistant chief engineer of the Foreign Economic Administration, arrived in Addis Ababa on May 2, 1944, with James M. Landis, American Director of Economic Operations in the Middle East; both were immediately received the same day by Emperor Hailä Sillassé.⁸³⁷ Perry’s trip in 1944 “resulted in an official report of recommendations of conditions Emperor Haile Selassie would need to meet in order to improve his country’s economic position.”⁸³⁸ In 1947, the Ethiopian Government employed Perry Fellows personally as Director of Planning Board and Industrial and Economic Advisor with the annual salary of US \$ 12,000.⁸³⁹ Eventually, “Perry Fellows who had led the original American technical mission to Ethiopia submitted to the Technical Cooperation Administration (TCA)—the official

⁸³⁵ Bahru, *A History of* ..., 184.

⁸³⁶ Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs(Alling) to the First Secretary of the British Embassy(Hayter), December 31, 1943, Department of State, 884.01A/62.

⁸³⁷ According to the document at State Depoartment, “the mission was sponsored by the Foreign Economic Administration and the Department of State. It was expected that the mission would be able to lend advice and assistance to Ethiopia to the Ethiopian Government in connection with problems of road construction, repair and maintenance and operation of public works, agricultural production and animal husbandry, exploration and development of mineral resources and the encouragement of better sanitation and public health.” Letter from the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs(Alling) to the First Secretary of the British Embassy(Hayter), December 31, 1943, Department of State, 884.01A/62.

⁸³⁸ Mevety, 383-384.

⁸³⁹ Contract between Perry Fellows and Ras İmīru Hailä Sillassé, April 23 1947, Folder No. A 6071-6107, ŠM, MOFED.

organization of Point Four—a forty-page proposal he had created on behalf of the IEG.”⁸⁴⁰ In short, Point Four had its origin in the 1943 mission which was led by Yīlma Déréssa.

5.2. Yīlma after the establishment of the Ministry of Finance

Whilst the new Ethiopian Currency was ready for circulation, Yīlma fully intended to be transferred to the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts, though in vain. Three months before he wrote a letter of application to the Emperor, as Emanuel Abraham, the Director General of the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts went to the USA in March 1945 to attend the UN Conference, Emperor Hailā Sīllassé appointed Yīlma acting minister of the Ministry of Education and Arts on March 23 1945.⁸⁴¹ Having accepted this additional position enthusiastically, he accomplished his responsibilities with passionate interest in education for about ten months.⁸⁴² As I will discuss the experience of my subject of study in the Ministry of Education later, suffice to note here that Yīlma was much more interested in structural and systemic undertakings than routine administrative activities.

Remarking on the condition of the Ministry of Finance in his letter of application to the Emperor Yīlma wrote:

የገንዘብ ሚኒስቴር በብድር፣ በሕግና በደንብ በኩል የሌሎች አገር የፊናንስ ኦርጋኒዛሲዮን ያሉትን ሁሉ አለው። የክሬዲሲ ሕግ ሊወጣ የሚቀረው ትንሽ ነገር ነው። ቤቱ ግርግዳዎችና ጣረያ አግኝቶዋል። የቀረው የዲኮራሲዮንና የመብል ፈንታ ነው። በኔ አስተያየት ሞዴራሲዮንና በተሰራው ላይ መቀጠልና ማገዝ የሚፈቅድ ሹም ያለብዙ ችግር ሊያስተዳድረው ይችላል። የግርማዊነትን ፈቃድ ሆኖ የተዛወርኩ እንደሆን በትምህርትና

⁸⁴⁰ Mevety, 384.

⁸⁴¹ The Ministry of Pen to Yīlma Déréssa, March 22, 1945, Personal File of Yīlma Déréssa, HO, MOFED; Emmanuel, 58.

⁸⁴² Tāklā Ṣadiq, *Yā hīy-wāt Tariké...*, 116-123; Yīlma Déréssa to Emperor Hailā Sīllassé, Dated June 28, 1945, Folder No. A6042-6070, *ŠM*, MOFED(See Appendix VIII); Emmanuel, 55.

ባለፉት ሺ አመቶች ውስጥ ስለፊናንስ ሥራ ያጠራቀምኩት
ኤክስፒሪያንስ ለሚተካኝ ሰው በምክር አኳሆን በፍጹም ልብ
እንዲሰጠው [እንደምሰጠው?] ግርማዊነትዎ ሊተማመን ይችላል።

Regarding loan, proclamation and regulation, the Ministry of Finance consists of fundamental institutional attributes equivalent to a finance organization in other countries. The currency decree is about to be proclaimed. At this instant, the institutional home does have walls and roof. It remains only decoration as well as operation. In my view, a government official who would aspire to modernize and smarten the Ministry could administer it without much difficulty. If I am transferred to the Ministry of Education with the good will of the imperial majesty, I assure your majesty that I am ready to share my career experience that I accumulated through formal education and 4 years of work experience by way of advice to an office holder who would replace me.⁸⁴³

As noted in the above quotation, the Ministry of Finance, since the period of its foundation, had secured notable sum of money through loans and grants from three western governments and one international organization. The British aid, discussed in the previous chapter, was the first to be gotten hold of. Since 1944, three loans, with which Yīlma was occupied closely, arrived from the government of the United States, the government of Sweden and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development subsequently.

Besides the Lend-Lease aid, Ethiopia was privileged to secure two preliminary loans from the Export-Import Bank of Washington. The first was granted in 1944 involving a principal of U.S. \$ 500,000 against collateral of gold bars in the form of a gold pledge held by the State Bank of Ethiopia for the Imperial Ethiopian Government.⁸⁴⁴ As Yīlma had been duly invested the right, power and authority to ratify in the name of the Imperial Government of Ethiopia all financial and credit agreements approved the Agreement entered into between the State Bank of Ethiopia (Billata Ephrem Tāwāldā Mādhīn and Mr. George Blowers) and Export-Import Bank of

⁸⁴³ Yīlma Dérēssa to Emperor Hailā Sīllassē, Dated June 28, 1945, Folder No. A6042-6070, ŠM, MOFED (Seeo Appendix VIII).

⁸⁴⁴ Foreign Contractual Obligations of Ethiopia, Not Dated, Folder No. C 718-749, ŠM, MOFED.

Washington (Mr. Warren Lee Pierson).⁸⁴⁵ Interest was 4% and the principal was paid in 1945 and the balance in 1946. The second Eximbank loan was by far the more important. The original agreement was dated July 23, 1946, and extended to Ethiopia a line of credit equal to U.S. \$ 3 million to be classified in the financing of specified classes of imports from the United States including automobiles with their spare parts, machinery, U.S. services, hardware and building materials, printing of currency notes and minting of copper coins, cigarette machinery, equipment for gold mining, electrical equipments, education, road building and Ministry of Finance garage.⁸⁴⁶

Original credit of Swedish Kroner 5 million granted on October 5, 1945 extended to Swedish Kroner 7.5 million on September 14, 1946. The credit was used for the purchases in Sweden of equipment for hospitals and schools (approximately 45% of the total loan), for traveling expenses (23%), and for the transfer of salaries of Swedish personnel employed by the Ethiopian Government (32%).⁸⁴⁷

In connection with external aid and loans, Yīlma had played an important role in availing Ethiopia of membership in the Bretton Woods system in late 1940s.⁸⁴⁸ In August 1948, Ethiopia availed herself of her membership in International Monetary Fund (IMF) to purchase U.S. \$ 300,000 from the IMF for an equivalent sum in her own currency. About a year later, in October 1949, she purchased an equivalent amount of U.S. dollars from the IMF. In September 1950, Ethiopia repurchased her own currency in the amount of US. \$ 300,000 and in March 1951

⁸⁴⁵ The Ministry of Finance to *Ato Aklilu Habtäwäld*, Dated November 18 1945, Folder No. A 6071-6071, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁸⁴⁶ As to amounts that were spent under the Eximbank loan for banknotes and loans, for example, we have the following figures: for 12 million 5 ¢ copper coins, U.S. \$ 58,420 in 1947; for more than 8 million banknotes, about U.S.\$ 117,000 in 1949; for 16 million 5 ¢ and 10 ¢ coins about U.S. \$ 184,000 again in 1949 and for unspecified number of banknotes about U.S. \$ 337,000 were spent in 1951. *Foreign Contractual Obligations of Ethiopia*, Not Dated, Folder No. C 718-749, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁸⁴⁷ *Foreign Contractual Obligations of Ethiopia*, Not Dated, Folder No. C 718-749, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁸⁴⁸ Yīlma Dēréssa Prison Testament in Yāmanā Īgigu's possession, New York.

made a second re-purchase of the entire amount of her own currency held by the IMF in excess of her quota(U.S.\$ 6 million).⁸⁴⁹

A glance at the *Negarit Gazeta* especially throughout the 1940s confirms that considerable number of proclamations and legal notices related to the undertakings of the Ministry of Finance had been endorsed. Here, as numerous as these official edicts of the imperial government had been, focusing only on official laws pertinent to Yilma is in order. Though not a few legal notices and proclamations were issued in the *Negarit Gazeta* under his authority, it is difficult to conclude that all those proclaimed by his name were Yilma's accomplishments.⁸⁵⁰

Even so, besides few yet important proclamations to the endorsement of which Yilma had contributed substantially as discussed earlier, some financial decrees are credited to Yilma Déréssa notwithstanding some were issued under the authority of *Şāhfē Ti'zaz Wäldä-Giorgis* , the Minister of Pen. Among these, a Proclamation to Regulate Currency (No. 31 of 1942) is noteworthy. Having defined "foreign currency" as any currency other than Maria Theresa Dollar, East African Shillings and Italian Lira, this proclamation endorsed that 'except with permission granted by or on behalf of the Ministry of Finance, no person other than an authorized dealer shall in Ethiopia buy, borrow or lend any foreign currency.'⁸⁵¹ At the same time, sources indicate, in endorsing the Proclamation to establish a State Monopoly in Respect of Tobacco, Matches and Pocket Lighters, Yilma played a significant role. Accordingly it was an established State Monopoly(also referred to as "the Regei") in respect of the purchase, preparation,

⁸⁴⁹ On each purchase the Fund levied a service charge of 0.75% in addition to which Ethiopia paid charges on the average daily balance of its currency held by the Fund in excess of its quota, to the total extent of 170.492 fine troy ounces of gold (U.S.\$ 10, 467).*Ibid.*

⁸⁵⁰ *Ibid.* In my effort to mark out his individual deeds in the financial legal regime, I relied on two unpublished documents-one at the Ministry of Finance and a written account in the family's possession-which corroborated one another. Brief biographical account from Yilma Déréssa to the Editor of the Institute for Research in Biography, Dated 3rd September, 1945, Personal File, HIO, MOFED;

⁸⁵¹ *Negarit Gazeta*, 2nd Year No.2, A Proclamation to Regulate Currency (No. 31 of 1942),October 31, 1942.

manufacture, sale, import and export of matches, pocket lighters, tobacco, cigarette, machinery and detached pieces of machinery serving in the manufacture of tobacco.⁸⁵² “The Tobacco Regie fetched between Eth \$1 million and Eth \$ 1.5 million per year. A Tobacco Factory was started in 1942 with thirty workers and a monthly production of about 100,000 cigarettes. Within two years, the factory boasted more than 300 workers and an output of more than 2 million cigarettes per month.”⁸⁵³

The other financial decree to the implementation of which Yílma and Stafford were probably credited is a ‘Proclamation to Regulate the Imposition of Duties on Goods Exported from and Imported into Ethiopia (No. 39, 1943)’. Sources imply that this proclamation seems to have been translated from English, thus, not drafted initially by Yílma or his assistants at the Ministry.⁸⁵⁴ According to the proclamation, there had been charged, levied, collected and paid duties on all goods imported into and exported from Ethiopia at the rates specified in the tariff set out in the schedule to this proclamation. All schedules, tariffs and duties in force at the date of the coming into force of this proclamation were repealed.⁸⁵⁵

Included with the list of proclamations that sources mention under Yílma’s authorship were the Alcohol Excise Duty Proclamation (Legal Notice No. 23 of 1943), a Proclamation to Provide for Stamp Duties (No. 41 of 1943) and a Proclamation to Provide for the Payment of a Tax by all individuals and Businesses (No. 60 of 1944).⁸⁵⁶ The latter one proclaimed that a subject to the provisions of this decree there shall be charged, levied and collected on every person resident in

⁸⁵² *Negarit Gazeta*, 2nd Year No.2, A Proclamation to establish a State Monopoly in Respect of Tobacco, Matches and Pocket Lighters (No 30 of 1942), October 31, 1942.

⁸⁵³ Talbot, 207.

⁸⁵⁴ Yä’Gänzäb Ministér Liqäbäl Yämigäbaw gäbiwočina Yädärsäbätün Akuahon yämiyasräda zürzir” A Report of the Ministry of Finance, Hamlé 11, 1934 E.C., Folder No, A 2934-2957, *SM*, MOFED.

⁸⁵⁵ *Negarit Gazeta*, 2nd Year No.10, A Proclamation to Regulate the Imposition of Duties on Goods Exported from and Imported into Ethiopia (No. 39, 1943); *Negarit Gazeta*, 2nd Year No.10, Dated 8th July, 1942.

⁸⁵⁶ Brief biographical account from Yílma Déréssa to Editor of the Institute for Research in Biography, 3rd September, 1945. Personal File, HIO, MOFED.

Ethiopia(in receipt of income) and every business operating in the country a tax at the rates specified in the schedules to this proclamation.⁸⁵⁷

Besides these, Yilma alleged that he was the author of the following three proclamations of considerable importance in the history of public finance during the Imperial Government: the Land Tax Proclamation of 1944(No. 70 of 1944), A Proclamation to Authorize the Expenditure for the Government Services (No.71 of 1945), and Currency and Legal Tender Proclamation (No. 76 of 1945).⁸⁵⁸ The first one replaced the Land Tax Proclamation of the 1942. In this proclamation, the government of Ethiopia made particular reference to the provinces with respective differential tax rates. It also allowed certain exemptions from the land tax, distinguished between measured and unmeasured land, and extended the tax to include a tithe. The provinces of Goğam, Tigré, and Bāgēmīdīr were excluded from the standards mentioned in Article 4 of the Proclamation. These standards include a land tax payable as charged in the 1942 Proclamation, and a tithe, traditionally paid in kind and henceforth to be paid in currency. In these three provinces, however, taxes were to be paid in money at the rate which was in force in 1927, plus the estimated tithe in money. The law also shifted the power of measuring and classifying land from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Finance.⁸⁵⁹

According to Bulcha Demeksa(1967), “the Proclamation to Authorize the Expenditure for the Government Services was indeed the first governmental budget to be published in Ethiopia and

⁸⁵⁷ *Negarit Gazeta*, 3rd Year No.9A Proclamation to Provide for the Payment of a Tax by all Individuals and Businesses, 29th May, 1944.

⁸⁵⁸ Brief biographical account from Yilma Déréssa to Editor of the Institute for Research in Biography, 3rd September, 1945, Personal File, HO, MOFED; Yilma Déréssa Prison Testament In Yāmanā Īgīgu's possession, New York.

⁸⁵⁹ Schwab, 15; *Negarit Gazeta*, 4th Year, No. 2, Land Tax Proclamation of 1944(No. 70 of 1944), 1st November 2nd, 1944.

covered the fiscal year of 1937 E.C.(1944/45).⁸⁶⁰ This was one of the major duties of the Minister of Finance. The Minister, as per article 45/a of an Order No 1 of 1943, was supposed “to prepare the annual budget of the government and submit it to the Council of Ministers.”⁸⁶¹

With regard to the approach that was followed by the Ministry in the public expenditure, it clearly implemented the traditional budget approach known in some literature as the ‘administrative budget’. The administrative budget contained the executive’s recommendations concerning the raising of revenue and the disposal of it for purposes of government.⁸⁶² The format of the budget document was essentially similar to the neighboring countries under British colonial rule. Written sources at the Ministry imply that some documents on the accounts of colonial governments of Sudan and Kenya appeared to be consulted in the budget preparation.⁸⁶³

Under this Proclamation from the public revenue of the Empire and from other reserve funds, the amount of Maria Theresa Dollars \$ 37,942,556 and 31 cents was appropriated for the services of the Ethiopian Government for the year ending on 30th Nahassei 1937(5th of September, 1945).⁸⁶⁴ The proclamation also revealed the revenue estimates for the fiscal year (MTD \$ 38,072,000). The revenue estimates of the 1944/45 was presented under five headings namely, land revenue (MTD \$ 16,150,000), Inland Revenue (MTD \$4,830,000), licenses and fees (MTD \$466,000), earnings of government departments (MTD \$5,856,000) and miscellanies

⁸⁶⁰ Bulcha, “The Ethiopian...”: 369.

⁸⁶¹ *Negarit Gazeta*, 2nd Year No. 5, An Order to Define the Powers and Duties of Our Ministers (Order No. 1 of 1943), January 29, 1943.

⁸⁶² There are also Capital budget, Cash budget, National Accounts budget, Unified budget, Full-Employment budget and Program budget. See Editors “Government Finance” in *New Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 20, 15th ed. (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. 1986), 197a-198a.

⁸⁶³ Sudan Government Accounts for the Year 1943 Vol. 1, Folder No. A6042-6070, ŠM, MOFED; Colony and Protectorate of Kenya Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the Year 1945, Folder No. A6042-6070, ŠM, MOFED; “Yä’Sudan Mängist Yä’Asra zäṭāñ sālasa sīdīst/sābat Īškā Tahīsas 21 Qān kāyawīraḡawočina kāYāmāsīriya bētoč Yātāgāñā ḡābina wāči hisab”, Folder No. A 6042-6070, ŠM, MOFED.

⁸⁶⁴ *Negarit Gazeta*, 4th Year, No. 4, A Proclamation to Authorize the Expenditure for the Government Services for the Year Ending the 5th of September 1945, December 30, 1944.

(MTD \$10,770,000). The expenditure estimates was scheduled under 17 budget titles that were referred to the government ministries and departments to which the money was allotted. About MTD \$ 2,500,000 was allocated for the Ministry of Finance.⁸⁶⁵

Since “the compilation of the amounts proposed for expenditure was the most complicated and time consuming part of the preparation of the budget,”⁸⁶⁶ it seems far-fetched to conclude that Yilma did it individually. After a relatively skilled man power in public finance was employed in the institution, Yilma himself purposefully spread the work load. For instance, the head of the Department of Director of Finance performed functions related to budget preparation. He received, reviewed, and compiled the estimates of the various Ministries for the annual budget. He also had to see that the estimates were in accordance with all the financial regulations of the Imperial Government and of the Ministry. In carrying out his duties, he was in constant touch with the fiscal officers of other ministries.⁸⁶⁷ Therefore, as the highest government official in the Ministry, it can be argued that Yilma could lead and oversee closely the process of the budget preparation and its implementation. It is apparent that the final word on public expenditure most often came from the Emperor.

⁸⁶⁵ *Ibid.* Of which the share of head Office was (MTD \$239,716). The remaining was distributed among Märha Tībāb Printing Office(MTD \$114,620), Finance and Budget Section(MTD \$24,700), General Control Section(MTD \$151,309), Indirect Revenue Department(MTD \$165,196), General Treasury(MTD \$103,678), Customs(MTD \$428,962), Treasuries and Store Guards(MTD \$35,916), land revenue department(MTD \$114,195), Provincial Treasuries(MTD \$103,7809). The general estimated expenditures allocated for all ministries and departments were: Civil list(MTD \$2,053,174), Prime Minister(MTD \$220,683), Ministry of Communications,(MTD \$218,334), Ministry of Public Works(MTD \$3,250,000), Ministry of Education and Fine Arts(MTD \$1,672,450), Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MTD \$234,447), Ministry of Interior(MTD \$10,970,449), Ministry of Agriculture(MTD \$679,639), Ministry of Foreign Affairs(MTD \$978,825), Ministry of War (MTD \$7,976,334), Ministry of Pen(MTD \$ 1,003,158), Ministry of Justice (MTD \$1,371,104), Ministry of Posts(MTD \$630,586), Imperial Guards(MTD \$ 1,959,722), Aviation Department(MTD \$200,000), Unforeseen Expenditure(MTD \$2023,650). A Proclamation to Authorize the Expenditure for the Government Services for the Year Ending the 5th of September 1945.

⁸⁶⁶ Bulcha, “The Ethiopian...” 373.

⁸⁶⁷ William Edward Howard, *Public Administration in Ethiopia: A Study in Retrospect and Prospect* (Djakarta: J.B. Walters. 1955), 145.

Consisting of eleven articles with three schedules (dealing with issues related to the minting and withdrawal of the currency; penalties for wrongful issue, counterfeiting as well as illegal treatment of the new currency and the transition period) as an addendum, the currency and legal tender proclamation (No. 76 1945) was a detailed decree.⁸⁶⁸ It started by defining the monetary unit of the country as the Ethiopian dollar (E\$) with the value of 5.52 grains (equivalent to 0.355745 grams) of fine gold. The purpose of fixing the value Ethiopian currency thus had a global rationale:

This link with gold was in accord with the new monetary system established by the Breton Woods Agreement of 1944, which, inter alia created the International Monetary Fund(IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development(IBRD also known as the World Bank) of which Ethiopia was signatory and founding member. Such linkage between the national currency and gold automatically established the exchange rate between it and other currencies with the same arrangement. Accordingly, the exchange rate between the Ethiopian dollar and the US dollar was US \$ 0.4025 and sterling 2/ per Ethiopian dollar.⁸⁶⁹

In this connection, it is pertinent to mention just an issue in which the IMF authorities and Yilma were engaged after the introduction of Ethiopian new currency. In a letter to him in August 1946, for instance, the Fund requested Yilma all information available especially recent monthly data on gold production for 1945 and 1946, export and imports by principal countries and principal commodities since 1944, figures in the production of coffee, cereals, pulse, wheat flour and hides for 1944 and 1945, index of cost of living from 1936 to date, index of hourly wage rates from 1936 to date.⁸⁷⁰ In reply to these queries, the Ministry of Finance noted that the Ethiopian gold production for the year 1945 was about 63, 414 ounces and for the year 1946(until the end of

⁸⁶⁸ *Negarit Gazeta*, 4th Year N. 9, Currency and Legal Tender Proclamation (No. 76 of 1945), May 29th, 1945.

⁸⁶⁹ Befekadu, "The Development of...", 247.

⁸⁷⁰ Ethiopian Legation at Washington to the Ministry of Finance, 25th October, 1946, Folder No. A 6071-6107, ŠM, MOFED.

October), 38,734 ounces.⁸⁷¹ If such is a glimpse at my subject of the study in relation to the major historical developments with regard to the Ministry of Finance in mid 1940s, I now turn to Yilma's public life thereafter by and large until he was transferred to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Official documents throughout 1940s imply that Yilma was busily occupied with diverse financial and economic issues of routine and exceptional nature. The fiscal centralization that was begun especially with the establishment of the Ministry seems to have obliged Yilma's consent or approval on almost every issue. A careful examination of written sources shows that, particularly during the formative period of his career, Yilma sat at the apex of a highly centralized bureaucracy in the Ministry. Matters he dealt with ranged from personal payout for an individual who came to the Ministry with an imperial order (*mazäža*) to the purchasing of air planes and their spare parts in an attempt to establish the Ethiopian Air Lines.⁸⁷²

In the period under discussion, letters from within and without the institution were directly addressed to him and most often he went through the majority of them. But, this did affect the Ministry's activities. Payments due from the Ministry of Finance were held up because of the

⁸⁷¹ Export Import figures not compiled by countries. Exports in Ethiopian dollars by commodities from September 1943 to September 1944 Coffee 7,052, 521, Cereals and Pulses 4,757,207, Flour 3, 349,080, Hides 2,274,838, total 26, 055,599. The production of coffee in in the same year amounted to 11,882,908 Kgs, flour 6,869, 600 Kgs, hides 2,598,370. Cereal production estimated 3 million tons per year. From September 1944 to September 1945, Coffee 12,030,721, Cereals and Pulses 4,638, 903, Flour 4,551,915, Hides 901,474, total 31,340, 761. The production of coffee in the same year amounted to 12,152,662 Kgs, flour 13, 872, 490 Kgs, hides 1,534,529 Kgs. September 1945 to March 1946, Coffee 11,294, 560, Cereals and Pulses 2,539,532 , Flour 2,211,466, Hides 3,915,997, total 39,172, 628. Imports in Ethiopian dollar from September 1943 to September 1944 textiles 29,230,501, Petroleum products 2,184, 436, salt 1,167,129, sugar 1,000,134, tobacco products 366,372, spirits 443,365, total 39,100,004. From September 1944 to 1945 textiles 26,930, 506, Petroleum products 2,354, 533, salt 2,526,121, sugar 652,647, tobacco products 600,545, spirits 792,831, total 37,680,390. September 1945 to march 1946, textiles 12,035,437, Petroleum products 1,866,810, salt 2,050,058, sugar 407,683 , tobacco products 598, 885 , spirits 331,421 total 20,724,222. The Ministry of Finance to Ethiopian Legation at Washington, 1st November, 1946, Folder No. A 6071-6107, ŠM, MOFED.

⁸⁷² *Kä Šihfät Ministér lä Gänzäh Ministér silä Täläyayü gudayoč Yätäšafu däbdabéwoč* from September 11 1945 to Sseptember 5 1946, IES MS 1733 and IES, MS 1734; Yilma Déréssa to Zäwdé Gäbrä-Hiwät, February 27, 1947, Folder No. A 5515-5600, ŠM, MOFED. Yilma Déréssa to Chief Treasurer, January 10, 1947, Folder No. A 5515-5600, ŠM, MOFED.

formality of obtaining the signature of the Yilma upon checks. Stafford once complained that “it was an unnecessary waste of the time of a high officer of State.”⁸⁷³ The British financial adviser kept on reproaching that “check signing was little more than a routine business and he didn’t suppose the British chancellor of exchequer and high officials of the treasury ever saw a check.”⁸⁷⁴ Yet, it is difficult to make valid comparison, as twenty century United Kingdom was different from twentieth century Ethiopia.

The weekly meetings of the Council of Ministers on Tuesdays, the recurrent summits at the State Bank of Ethiopia, the Agricultural Bank of Ethiopia, the Sabea Utility and various ministries were also aspects of Yilma’s public life throughout 1940s. As the meetings were numerous, the agenda for the meetings were also enormously diverse.⁸⁷⁵ However, Yilma didn’t attend all these meetings despite he was called for most of them persistently. Even during his presence in the capital, there were quite a few times when he declined to attend the weekly meetings of the

⁸⁷³ Financial Adviser to Director General of Finance, 9th January, 1943, Folder No. B 2632-2683, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁸⁷⁴ *Ibid*.

⁸⁷⁵ The Ministry of Interior to Yilma Déréssa, March 19, 1942 and June 16, 1942; *Šāhafē Tizaz* Wäldä Giorgis to Yilma Déréssa, November 19, 1942, October 21, 1948, June 20, July 4, 1949; The Council of Ministers to Yilma Déréssa, October 21, 1943, December 26, 1944, September 3, 20 1945, November 18, 1945, April 1, 1946, June 17, 1946, October 20, January 16, April 30, July 22, August 27, 1947, February 15, 1948; The Sabea Utility Corp. Ltd to Yilma Déréssa, February 6, 1945, May 11, 1946; Yilma Déréssa to Balambaras Gäbrä Mädhin, June 11, 1945; Agricultural Bank of Ethiopia to Yilma Déréssa, September 5 and 20, October 8, 11 and 24 1945, December 8, 1945, May 1, 13, September 21, 1946, January 27, March 19, April 23, 1947; The Ministry of Commerce and Industry to Yilma Déréssa, August 27, October 12, 28 November 2 and 13, 1945; Public Library and Archive to Yilma Déréssa, Dated September 20, 1945; Yilma Déréssa to the Council of Ministers, December 16, 1945, The Ministry of Justice to Yilma Déréssa, February 1, 1946; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Yilma Déréssa, May 31, 1946 The Prime Minister Office to Yilma Déréssa, July 2, 1946, September 20, 1946, May 30, April 3, 5, 1947, September 1, November 20, 1948; The Ministry of Communications and Works to Yilma Déréssa, March 25, May 1, July 22, 1947, December 3, 1948; The State Bank of Ethiopia to Yilma Déréssa, Dated September 12, 17, 1946, January 9, April 7, 15, 23, December 2 1947, May 24, 1948 August 6, 1948; Yilma Déréssa to *Bitwädäd* Mäkonin Īndalkačäw, Dated December 7, 1945, August 16, 1948; The Ministry of Agriculture to Yilma Déréssa, February 3, 1948, March 22, 1949; The Ministry of War to Yilma Déréssa, December 16, 1948, March 19, 25, 1949, The above letters and documents are found in the personal File of Yilma Déréssa, HO, MOFED (See Appendix V); Letter from the Imperial Government of Ethiopia to the Stettinius Associates, May 15, 1948, Folder No. A 3082-3136, *ŠM*, MOFED.

Council of Ministers in the 1940s. He was also known as a late arrival.⁸⁷⁶ Thus, he was penalized frequently as per the Council's regulation of fixed financial penalty as of October 4, 1943.⁸⁷⁷ In his responses for written allegations and financial penalties, Yilma also claimed that he was absentee because he took special assignments from the Emperor.⁸⁷⁸

As novel as the practice of budgeting had been in Ethiopia, it was difficult to handle issues related especially to public expenditure for Yilma in the period under discussion. Retrospectively, Yilma envied the young officials employed in a later period for the opportunity they had got to work with authorities like him who were relatively well versed in modern finance. Few nobles from the traditional political system covertly defied the authority of Yilma in early 1940s. Encouraged by the Emperor to bring financial issues to his attention through the traditional political practice at the palace (*guday maqräbiya* or *aqqabé sä'at*), they most often sought a conventional solution to fiscal problems.⁸⁷⁹

Even though the financial legal regime empowered the Ministry of Finance and the Council of Ministers on matters of public finance, the Emperor had always the last word. In this regard, the political tradition of the royal schedule (*aqqabé sä'at* or *guday maqräbiya*) had served as a major administrative manoeuvre. "The weekly *aqqabé sä'at* was an opportunity to report on the major activities of the respective departments."⁸⁸⁰ Officials of the Imperial Government of Ethiopia "could get clearance for decisions needing Imperial approval, request additional funds, suggest

⁸⁷⁶ The Council of Ministers to Yilma Déréssa, October 13, 1943; November 18, 1945, April 1, May 11, and June 17, 1946, January 16 and July 22, 1947, Personal File of Yilma Déréssa, HO, MOFED. Yilma Déréssa to Bitwädäd İndalkaçäw Mäkonin, Dated December 7, 1945, Folder No. A 6071-6107, ŠM, MOFED.

⁸⁷⁷ The Council of Ministers to Yilma Déréssa, October 21, 1943, Personal File of Yilma Déréssa, HO, MOFED

⁸⁷⁸ Yilma Déréssa to Bitwädäd İndalkaçäw Mäkonin, December 7, 1945, Folder No. A 6071-6107, ŠM, MOFED.

⁸⁷⁹ Informant: Asfaw Damté.

⁸⁸⁰ Taffara, 137.

new projects of political importance and seek special approval to attend certain international events. An imperial secretary took notes on the discussions and prepared orders. The meetings usually lasted for about fifteen minutes.”⁸⁸¹ Most often, finance was at the very heart of *aqqabé sā’at* discussions. As a scholar on the Imperial Government remarked “it is a well-established maxim of political administration that the way to a government's heart is through its treasury.”⁸⁸² After discussions in the *aqqabé sā’at*, the emperor authorized payments by way of imperial order (*mazäža*). To settle these and other financial matters, Yilma was summoned frequently to the palace, though the time scheduled for the Ministry of Finance in the *aqqabé sā’at* was every Mondays from 5:00 P.M. to 5:30 P.M in early 1940s.⁸⁸³

Beginning from its conception, however, the imperial order (*mazäža*) wasn’t a disordered practice as demonstrated in the literature. Sources testify that there were administrative and normative limits to the alleged arbitrary authorization of government expenditure by the Emperor contrary to a conclusion in a standard work on the Imperial Government of Ethiopia. For instance, Clapham(1969) stated that “the usual way of getting money was through *aqqabé sā’at*, the Emperor naturally granted appropriation whenever he wished to do so, not only for ordinary government spending, but also for personal benefactions, grants for special service, and anything else for which money was needed.”⁸⁸⁴ However, both archival and oral sources testify that though the Emperor did oversee the expenditure closely, he most often let his

⁸⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸² Clapham, 155.

⁸⁸³ Wäldä-Giorgis Wäldä-Yohannes to the Minister of Finance, Ginbot 30, 1935 E.C. Ref. No. 1789, File No. Not given, File Name “Silä Manačäwim(trans. ‘About anything’), Folder No. A 5377-5446, ŠM, MOFED; Informants: Bulča Dämäqsa, Mängäša Siyum, Habtä-Silassé Tafäsa.

⁸⁸⁴ Clapham, 156.

authorities at the Ministry to make their expert reflections on financial matter at hand. Hence, informants emphasize, not all imperial orders were executed.⁸⁸⁵

Furthermore, a fraction of the imperial order (*mazäza*) due to which the financial system of the Imperial Government acquired bad reputation was taken at the Ministry since the *mazäza* was made as maintained by a budget schedule earmarked officially for that purpose. For instance, in the 1944/45 fiscal year, about 2,053,174 Maria Theresa Dollars were allocated for the Civil List. Of which MTD 500,000 marked down for the Royal benefactions (*lä'darägot lä'bägo tägbar*).⁸⁸⁶ However, the money allocated was already run out of supply by January 1945. Hence, the Emperor authorized additional MTD 100, 000 from a budget schedule (17) earmarked as “Unforeseen Expenditure”.⁸⁸⁷ However, the transfer of additional expenditure from schedule 17 to another budget schedule, specifically 1(c), was carried out at the Ministry in a transparent way.⁸⁸⁸ With regards to this, Yılma was not diffident in informing that the chest of the Royal benefactions was empty during his conversation with the Emperor in June 1943, for instance. The Emperor, on his part, commanded Yılma to submit the details of the financial report on the *darägot*, so he did.⁸⁸⁹ As the ceaseless flow of *mazäza* from the Emperor troubled the very *raison d'être* of public expenditure, informants recall, Yılma usually went to the palace and appealed

⁸⁸⁵ “*Kä Şihfät Ministér lä Gänzäh Ministér silä Täläyayü godayoç Yätäşafü däbdabéwoç* from Maskaram , 1938E.C to , 1946,Nahase 1938 E.C. (Ministry of Pen to the Ministry of Finance, September, 1945 to August, 1946), IES,MS 1733 and 1734; Bulcha Demeksa, *My Life My....*, Informants: Bulča Dämäqsa and Ašanafi Şifāraw.

⁸⁸⁶ Under the same expenditure schedule budget was allotted for maintenance of [the honor] of Imperial Palace (MTD 600,000), for civil list pensions (MTD 180,000), for Imperial banquets (MTD 25,000), for His Imperial Majesty's Aide de Camp's Office (MTD 15,000), for Mechanical Transport [of the palace] (MTD 175,000), for His Imperial Majesty's Chamberlin's Office (MTD 29,056), for His Imperial Majesty's private secretariat (MTD 70,410), for Chamber of Deputies and Chamber of senate (MTD 374,080), for Museum and National Library (MTD 58,856), for Distinguished guests reception office (MTD 8,846) and for *İcäegé's* office (MTD 16,026). *Negarit Gazeta*, 4th Year, No. 4, A Proclamation to Authorize the Expenditure for the Government Services for the Year Ending the 5th of September 1945, December 30, 1944.

⁸⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸⁸ “*Sila Bétämängist Darägot(ah)*” Dated January, 16, 1946, “*Kä Şihfät Ministér lä Gänzäh Ministér silä Täläyayü godayoç Yätäşafü däbdabéwoç* from Maskaram , 1938E.C to , 1946,Nahase 1938 E.C. (Ministry of Pen to the Ministry of Finance.) IES,MS 1733 and 1734

⁸⁸⁹ Ministry of Pen to Yılma Déréssa, June 28, 1943, Folder No. A 5377-5446, *ŞM*, MOFED.

for a reconsideration of the financial authorization at hand. Consequently, last decision was made after chances were given for the voices of the claimant for funds and Yilma before the Emperor.⁸⁹⁰

Though not as frequent as the problem that confronted Yilma and his associates in public expenditure, a few cases and situations also brought trouble for the Ministry. Among these, lack of statistics on land measurement and the interference of politics in finance deserve a brief discussion. Due to poor performance of land assessors whose skill and knowledge about land measurement were limited, a document at the Ministry show, not all lands were duly measured and landholdings were registered until 1947. Therefore, the revenue collected from provinces was said to be less than it was supposed to be. For instance, in the province of Gamo Gofa, about 1,838 serfs (*gäbar*) were registered and, given their number and the size of land measured, the total revenue collected amounted to Eth \$ 213,068.63. Besides the land assessors, the inspectors sent from the Ministry of Finance to provinces were also inefficient in land measurement, thus, did nothing but accepted the data that was compiled poorly at the provinces. Even in the provinces where the task of estimation was said to be completed, there were disputes between the Treasury Departments of the Ministry at provincial level and the Governorate of the provinces over the revenue from unmeasured lands.⁸⁹¹

In this regard, not only in the period under discussion but also throughout 1950s and 1960s, land revenue estimation was a major technical problem. Agricultural taxation in Ethiopia, Markakis recommended later in 1974, “couldn’t be placed on an orderly basis unless some form of land measurement was performed which would make proper tax assessment possible. The

⁸⁹⁰ Informant: Bulča Dāmāqsa

⁸⁹¹ Fikrā Sīllassé to the Director of Land Revenue, September 8, 1947, Folder No. A 6071-6107, ŠM, MOFED.

variety of measurement units used in various parts of the country was perplexing, and the inaccuracy of such measurement as had been performed was legendary.”⁸⁹² Empirical data from exact measurement applied in 1968 had proved this point right. “One area registered as 3,606 *gaša* turned out to be actually 12,566 *gaša*. Another area registered as 60,610 *gaša* was found to be 131,210 *gaša*.”⁸⁹³

Though not recurrent, Yilma had also taken on momentary challenges of political nature with his responsibility both in revenue collection as well as activities related to it. For instance, in late August 1946, a court issued a warrant based on the request of the Ministry of Finance to compel a certain Hailä Li’ul who run away from his responsibility taking the key of the Treasury house of Dīré Dawa to hand over the government money. However, Major Märīd Mängäša (later General and the then *aide-de-camp* of the Emperor) sent a short communiqué on behalf of the Emperor that commanded the withdrawal of warrant until the return of the monarch to the capital. Yilma, then, in his telegram to the Emperor through the Ministry of Pen, requested the Emperor to reconsider his order because of three formidable problems. First, Yilma argued, there were hoards of money locked in the treasury house. Second, currency denominations of which the banks were in need were deposited without proper utility. Third, as the period for a budget closure was approaching, this would cause difficulties for them in settling the annual finance.⁸⁹⁴

A much serious challenge for the Ministry came from the age-old institution of the country—the Ethiopian Church. There was protracted dispute between the Ministry of Finance and the administration of the Ethiopian Church over the inspection of the latter’s finance since 1942.

⁸⁹² Markakis, 343.

⁸⁹³ *Ibid.*, ff

⁸⁹⁴ Yilma Déréssa to Emperor Hailä Sillassé, August 30, 1946, Folder No. A 6071-6107, ŠM, MOFED.

Despite the mediation by the Ministry of Interior between the two parties, the problem continued until 1949. After exchange of official letters between the two institutions for consecutive eight years, the Ministry of Finance notified the Prime Minister that it would not be accountable at all for the mismanagement of the property of Ethiopian Orthodox Church.⁸⁹⁵

5.3 Yilma Déréssa beyond the Ministry of Finance

Besides his ministerial position at the Ministry, Yilma bore collective responsibilities at various institutions as a board member and president in the period under discussion. Together with Aklilu Habtä-Wäld and *Bilatta Zäwdé Bälaynäh*, for instance, he was appointed a member of the Consultative Committee of Legislation in September 1947.⁸⁹⁶ In place of Abäbä Rāta who left Addis Ababa for London as Ethiopia's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Great Britain, Yilma Déréssa was appointed to be President of the Board of Directors of the Ethiopian Air Lines as of August 31, 1948.⁸⁹⁷ Under the chairmanship of Aklilu Habtä-Wäld, he was also appointed to be member of Education Board in September 1948.⁸⁹⁸ More than the collective responsibilities he shouldered, however, Yilma seem to have played crucial role while he was temporarily appointed acting Vice-Minister of Works and Communications (January 1946-May 1946) and acting Vice-Minister of Education and Fine Arts (March 1945-March 1946).⁸⁹⁹ This section attempts to situate Yilma's place both in the Paris Peace

⁸⁹⁵ Land Revenue Directorate to the Prime Minister, March 26, 1949, File name, *Mämfäsawī Guba'e Šihfāt bēt*, Folder No. 2249, Wäldä Mäsqäl Tariku Memorial Archive, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University.

⁸⁹⁶ Wäldä Giorgis Wäldä Yohannīs to Yilma Déréssa, September 24, 1947, Personal File of Yilma Déréssa, HO, MOFED; *Negarit Gazeta*, 7th Year No. 2, October 31, 1947.

⁸⁹⁷ Wäldä Giorgis Wäldä Yohannīs to Yilma Déréssa, August 31, 1948, Personal File of Yilma Déréssa, HO, MOFED; *Negarit Gazeta*, 8th Year No. 1, 30th September, 1948.

⁸⁹⁸ Gäbra Wäld Īngīda Wärq, Dated September 29, 1948, Personal File of Yilma Déréssa, HO, MOFED.

⁸⁹⁹ Though my sources are silent on Yilma's activities, he was also acting Minister of Postal, Telegraph and Telephone (June 1944) and acting Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs (September 1948). Letter from the Ministry of Post, Telegraph and Telephone to Yilma Déréssa, Dated June 2, 1944, Personal File of Yilma Déréssa, HO, MOFED; Letter from the Wäldä Giorgis Wäldä Yohannīs to Yilma Déréssa, Dated March 22, 1945, Personal File

Conference of 1946 and the expansion of modern education. Nonetheless, before I examine these accomplishments, a word or two is pertinent on Yilma's undertakings while he accompanied Emperor Hailä Sillassé in his trip to Cairo in February 1945.

The invitation to the Emperor to visit President Roosevelt at the Great Bitter Lake of the Suez Canal came from the latter, after the Yalta Conference.⁹⁰⁰ Yilma, together with Major Märäd Mängäša, Abba Gäbrä Hanna Ğimma, Ras Kassa Hailu, Şähafé Tī'zaz Wäldä-Giorgis, Aklilu, Yilma, escorted the Emperor to Cairo⁹⁰¹ and "the Emperor met President Franklin D. Roosevelt and discussed issues of vital concern to Ethiopia at the time."⁹⁰² J.K. Caldwell, US Minister to Ethiopia reported:

*Conversation through tea was conducted between the President and the Emperor in French; after tea conversation was in Amharic and Mr. Deressa acted as interpreter, the only persons present being the President, the Emperor, Mr. Deressa, and (at the request of the President) myself. The conversation on official business lasted more than an hour and covered, among other matters, Ethiopia's need for a port; in reply to the President's question as to whether this should be Djibouti would be the best port because of the existing railway, but that a long term policy required a port in Eritrea.*⁹⁰³

Emperor Hailä Sillassé, "during most of the conversation out-lined Ethiopia's major concerns, substantially detailed in five memoranda handed to the president."⁹⁰⁴ The documents were

of Yilma Déréssa, Ministry of Finance (Head Office); Emmanuel, 55; Wäldä Giorgis Wäldä Yohannīs to Yilma Déréssa, September 15, 1948, Personal File of Yilma Déréssa, HO, MOFED.

⁹⁰⁰ Spencer, 159

⁹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 160

⁹⁰² Bahru, *A History of ...*, 184-185.

⁹⁰³ US Minister in Ethiopia (Caldwell) to the Secretary of State, February 27, 1945, Department of State, 884.001 Selassie, Haile/2-2745, United States Department of State / *Foreign relations of the United States : diplomatic papers, 1945. The Near East and Africa Foreign Relations, 1945, Vol VIII. Website: <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=turn&entity=FRUS.FRUS1945v08.p0017&id=FRUS.FRUS1945v08&size=M&q1=yilma>*

⁹⁰⁴ Marcus, *The Politics of ...*, 50.

rather lengthy, that they were read by the Emperor in Amharic and were translated into English by Yilma, a procedure which occupied most of the period of the Conversation.⁹⁰⁵

As far as Caldwell was aware ‘no commitments, promises or assurances of any kind were given by the President in response to the requests of the Emperor for assistance’ made in connection with the five memoranda. Caldwell further remarked that “all the important political matters mentioned during the conversation were brought up by the Emperor.”⁹⁰⁶ Instead of other Ethiopian authorities, as noted in the above lines, it was Yilma who assisted the Emperor in the conversation which focused basically on the country’s foreign affairs. This appears to be because of Yilma’s acquaintance and prior discussion with the President in June and July 1943.

Soon after the Cairo trip, a historic development did oblige the modest contribution of Yilma in finance and economies to the nation’s diplomatic struggle at the international arena: the Paris Peace Conference of 1946.⁹⁰⁷ In order to strengthen Ethiopia’s position on the issue of Eritrea

⁹⁰⁵ According to one of the delegates, “six topics were emphasized: (1) Highest priority was given to the necessity of access to the sea and a request for U.S. support for the return of Eritrea to provide a solution to this need; (2) the importance of Ethiopian control of the management of the railway to Djibouti, with a report on our negotiations to engage an American firm for this purpose; (3) the problems of the Ogaden, with a report on discussions with the Sinclair Oil Corporation and the expression of a wish to promote American enterprise in Ethiopia; (4) Ethiopia’s wish to participate in drafting the United Nations Charter to replace the Covenant of the League of Nations, and in so doing to help others profit from her own past experience under the League; (5) Ethiopia’s wish, as the first nation to enter the war against the Axis, to play a role in the decisions taken at the Peace Conference; and (6) a request for arranging the financing of greatly needed additional arms and transport, and communications equipment.” Spencer, 159.

⁹⁰⁶ US Minister in Ethiopia (Caldwell) to the Secretary of State, February 27, 1945, Department of State, 884.001 Selassie, Haile/2-2745

⁹⁰⁷ The Paris Peace Conference which was held for two months from July to August 1946 aimed at settling issues related to “the war against Italy. The United States, Britain, France, Soviet Union, and China determined the number and type of governments that could participate at Peace Agreement with Italy. The prior concern of Ethiopia in the conference was, among other matters, the future of the neighboring Italian colonies. The debate on the future of the former Italian colonies in Africa which had already started at the Potsdam conference in August was to be continued in London in September at a meeting of the Councils of Ministers of the Foreign Affairs of the four great powers. Ethiopia submitted a request to send a delegation to the London meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers since Italy had already been invited to attend. Her application was denied and Ethiopia was reduced to presenting her claims only by memoranda. An immense amount of research had to be conducted under the pressure of limited time. In the end, the memoranda we submitted to the London meeting and later to the Paris Peace Conference covered both Somalia and Eritrea, but with heavy emphasis on Eritrea in the basic Green Memorandum.” Aklilu Habtä-Wäld, *Aklilu Remembers, Historical Recollections from a prison cell Aklilu*

and to shed light on some aspects of Italian invasion as well as occupation of Ethiopia, especially the leader of the Ethiopian delegate, Aklilu Häbtä Wäld, the then Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, required some empirical data. Accordingly, just before the Ethiopian delegation left Addis Ababa for Paris in March 1946, Yilma took on special assignment from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In an urgent and confidential letter, the acting Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs asked for Yilma, on behalf of the Emperor, to prepare a memorandum, intended to be presented against the Italian imminent claim on Eritrea, substantiated with empirical data on issues related to finance problems in Eritrea. An addendum to the confidential letter was a list of questionnaire that focused on tax structures in Ethiopia and Eritrea, the position of the Ethiopian government in regard to import and export duties, and the conditions of Italian enterprises with reference to the Ethiopian tax policy.⁹⁰⁸

If it was assumed that, a copy of the prepared memorandum goes on, Ethiopia would become an integral part of Eritrea the then tax structure and legislation of Ethiopia would of necessity be applicable to Eritrea. The Ethiopian tax structure reflected the economy of the country and its stage of development as might be seen by the estimated revenues for the year 1945/46(Ethiopian year 1938). Of the total revenue, 51% for the fiscal year would be obtained directly or indirectly from agriculture or private and public owned extractive industries. Customs duties would account 20% of the total revenue. Income and profit taxes would provide only 5.5% of the revenue. The remaining quarter of the revenue would be derived from many sources the largest

Hailewold Prime Minister of Ethiopia, 1961-1974, trans. Getachew Tedla(Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2010), 157; Spencer, 174.

⁹⁰⁸ Acting Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs to Yilma Déréssa, March 14, 1946, Folder No. A 6071-6107, ŠM, MOFED.

of which accounted for but 4% of total income. Salt tax, court fees and fines, tobacco monopoly and Alcohol tax were the largest remaining items in that order.⁹⁰⁹

Applying the Ethiopian land tax to Eritrea, the memorandum advised, which in some areas is extremely arid, would present no difficulty if, as in Ethiopia, the rate varied with the district and the fertility of the land. On the other hand, Native Tribute, hut taxes, head taxes and similar levies collected in Eritrea through local chiefs on occasion led to local dissention and minor civil wars which required police forces on an army scale for their collection. Customs in Eritrea would lose the 1.5% ad valorem tax now collected as an in-transit tax on items destined for Ethiopia. This should be more than offset by the increase in Ethiopia's world trade occasioned by her obtaining a port of her own. Applying the Ethiopian tax system and rates to Eritrea would not in general raise the tax paid by the individual Eritrean but would eliminate the nuisance Native Tribute tax and the internal customs of the in-transit tax. Total revenue collected from tax sources would be lost but the Railway revenues and Port Marine dues should increase

⁹⁰⁹ A total of Eth \$ 48, 213, 070 was collected from land revenue(17,500,000), court fees and fines(1,500,000), customs(9,812,385), tobacco monopoly and factory(1,000,000), alcohol tax(800,000), inland revenue(5,900,000), stamp duty(250,000), licenses and fees(170,000), posts, telegraphs, telephones(750,000), Ministry of Agriculture(100,000), printing presses(300,000), education(100,000), public health(100,000), ministry of communications(100,000), mining(6,830,000), state domain(500,000), sale of stores(350,000), sale of agricultural products(500,000), interest on working capital(500,000) and unclassified receipts(1,500,000). Ethiopian revenue for 1943/44(Ethiopian Year 1936) was Eth \$ 23,973, 862 and for 1944/45(Ethiopian Year 1937) Eth \$ 38,072,000. Comparing the revenues of the two countries, the memorandum prepared in response to the request revealed that Ethiopian revenue had been rising continually from Eth \$ 15,904, 413(estimated anachronistically) in 1942/3 to Eth\$ 48,213,070 in 1945/6 while Eritrean revenue aside from Grants-in Aid appeared to be stable at around nine to ten million Ethiopian dollars. Eritrea being less fertile than Ethiopia received little or no tax from land. On the other hand, Eritrea is not a land-locked as is Ethiopia and her access to the sea had brought about an urban and commercial development not present in Ethiopia. The Eritrean tax was based on an Italian Royal Decree of 30 December 1909, No. 845 and has been applied by the British Military Administration in accordance with the International law governing occupied territories. A study of the relative importance of various tax sources for the year 1943/44 as apportion of total revenue immediately indicated a glaring difference between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Agricultural revenue in Eritrea (sale of Agricultural products) produces only Eth \$545,250 or but 5.8% of the total revenue compared to 51% in Ethiopia. The largest single item was Customs Eth % 2,715, 000 or 29% of all revenue compared with 20% in Ethiopia. Income tax was four times as important a source of revenue in Eritrea as it was in Ethiopia, 19% compared with 5.5% of all Ethiopian revenue. Going down the list of tax sources of Eritrea and Ethiopia it was found that they matched almost exactly with the exception of land tax on the part of Ethiopia and Native Tribute on the part of Eritrea. Memorandum concerning finance Problem in Ethiopia, Not Dated, Folder No. Folder No. A 6071-6107, *SM*, MOFED.

tremendously. In the final analysis, the memorandum concluded, along with the Ethiopian tax structure and Ethiopian tax rates, Eritrea would be under the Ethiopian tax collection.⁹¹⁰

As to the expenditure in Eritrea, it is noted in the memorandum, Eritrean taxes would not have to meet Eritrean expenses. During the British Military occupation of Eritrea, annual deficits had been met by grants-in-aid from the British Government. The analysis of revenue indicated that the application of the Ethiopian tax system would create a shortage of approximately \$ 5 million a year in the amount necessary to meet the then expenditure in Eritrea. The Ethiopian Government had never made a policy making one province's revenue and expenditures balance and did not intend to in the case of Eritrea. The Central government would maintain the then level of government services in Eritrea however certain Eritrean expenditures could be eliminated. It is argued that British Military personnel received much higher salaries and allowances than comparable ranks in Ethiopian civil service. Approximately Eth \$2.9 million savings could be made in expenditure from expenses related to Italian administration.⁹¹¹

The Ethiopian government would extend to Eritrea the then system used at home to assure foreigners of the safety of their investments, particularly from confiscatory taxation, concessions negotiated by the Ethiopian government and granted to foreigners always contained a clause guaranteeing that there would be no raise in their tax rate. There was a consideration to amend the Personal and Business Tax proclamation 1944 which would provide for the exemption from Income Tax for a period up to six years for every business presenting the character of a long term investment.⁹¹² The available sources point to the conclusion that "the Ethiopian delegation for

⁹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹¹ Among the major expenditures, Italian education took \$ 256,848, 10% of personnel emoluments (difference between cost of Italian and Ethiopian staff) \$800,929 and relief \$ 1,266,470, banking and exchange \$ 19,200 and intelligence \$ 45,540. *Ibid.*

⁹¹² *Ibid.*

the Paris Peace Conference of 1946 did make use of these figures to present Ethiopia's position regarding Eritrea for the first time."⁹¹³

Furthermore, Yilma had received an urgent request from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that urged him to compile and send full account on Eritrean officials employed and appointed in the Ethiopian government.⁹¹⁴ In the course of the Paris Conference too, he was asked for statistics on the houses destroyed, persons and cattle killed, number of widows and children compensated in various ways, the amount of private and public money expropriated by the Italians during the Ethio-Italian war and the occupation period.⁹¹⁵ Among the requests of the envoy, a copy of an account on the construction of roads and buildings by the Italians was documented in the Ministry of Finance. In a telegram via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Yilma wrote to Aklilu that of the total roads built by Italians 4,539 Kms evaluated at £ str. 3,384,220 was economically usable, strategic posts were washed way long ago. Cost of maintenance for these roads was estimated £ str. 937, 936. Of the 6,156 houses built by Italians, the majority were small barracks. The Ethiopian government had taken over 1,368 houses evaluated at £ str. 2,578,131. The rest were temporary bungalows gone to pieces during the campaign. Machineries and factories mostly uneconomical to operate were estimated £ str. 2,484,884. Quality of building being poor the Ethiopian government incurred maintenance expenses of £ str. 600,000. Other Italian expenses thousands of forts, transport and maintenance of large army, armament, military aviation, and strategic pist routes around the frontiers.⁹¹⁶ To sum up, we can conclude that

⁹¹³ Aklilu Habtä-Wäld, *Aklilu Remembers...*, 165.

⁹¹⁴ Acting Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs to Yilma Deressa, January 13, 1946, Folder No. A 6071-6107, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁹¹⁵ The Ethiopian Envoy to the Paris Peace Conference to Yilma Déréssa, 29 August, 1946, Folder No. A 6071-6107, *ŠM*, MOFED; Acting Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs to Yilma Déréssa, Dated August 20, 1946, Folder No. A 6071-6107, *ŠM*, MOFED.

⁹¹⁶ Yilma Déréssa to Aklilu Habtä Wäld, August 1, 1946, Folder No. A 6071-6107, *ŠM*, MOFED.

Yılma, together with his assistants, made modest contribution to Ethiopian mission at the Paris Peace Conference.

Meanwhile, he took on an additional responsibility since 22nd March, 1946 at the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts as Emmanuel Abraham, the Director General of the Ministry, left Ethiopia for United States as a member of the Ethiopian delegate to attend the United Nations Conference and stayed there for about four months.⁹¹⁷ Available sources agree on how Yılma was all enthusiastic about the expansion of modern education. As a Secretary-General at the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts remembered, Yılma set up a new office for him in the Ministry and commenced work energetically with a junior authority there. One of the first tasks with which Yılma and the the Secretary-General, *Ato* Tāklā-Şadiq Mākuria were occupied was examining education condition first in Addis Ababa and later on in the provinces.⁹¹⁸ Then, he paid frequent field visits to schools in Addis Ababa and discussed with authorities in the Ministry to establish elementary schools based mainly on the population of a quarter of the town. Relying on their document and field visit assessment, Yılma gave orders to reform the education system in terms of physical and human resource developments. For instance, so as to solve the shortage of buildings, he empowered Tāklā Şadiq personally to find out any public houses and rentable private buildings for school purpose in Addis Ababa. In doing so, Yılma paved the way for the establishments of some schools in Addis Ababa such as *däğazmač* Bāyānā Mārīd Secondary School, Şimālīs Habté Secondary School and Prince Asfa Wäsān School. He also

⁹¹⁷ In the reminiscences of Tāklā Şadiq Mākuria, however, Ato Emmanuel came back after eight months. Tāklā Şadiq, *Yä hīywät...*, 126; Emmanuel, 58. The Ministry of Pen to Yılma Déréssa, March 22, 1945, Personal File of Yılma Déréssa, HO, MOFED.

⁹¹⁸ Tāklā Şadiq, *Yä hīywät...*, 119.

became instrumental to the employment of teachers of diverse national background in order to limit the influence of British educators mainly to the General Wingate Memorial School.⁹¹⁹

Furthermore, writing reports and memoranda, Yilma attempted to convince the Emperor in the critical need to develop an integrated national educational policy. Indeed, zealous to serve in the establishment and expansion of education, he wrote letter of application to the Emperor for his transfer to the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts in June 1946:

የትምህርት ሚኒስቴርን ፕሮግራም ለማስፋትና ለመፈጸም የብዙ ሰዓት ሥራ በየቀኑ የሚያስፈልግ ነው። በዛሬ ጊዜ ከንጉሠ ነገሥቱ መንግሥት ያስተዳደር ሥራዎች ሁሉ ቀደምትነት ሊያገኝ የሚገባው የትምህርት ሥራ መሆኑን፤ ወደፊት ተምረው የሚደርሱ ኤክስፐርት[ኤክስፐርቶች?] የሚያስተዳደሩት ካልሆነ ግርማዊነትም በዘመነ መንግስትም የደከሙበት የማሻሻል (የሪፎርም) ሥራ ሁሉ የሚገባውን ፍሬ ሳይሰጥ እንዲቀር[እንዳይቀር?] የሚያስፈራ መሆኑን፤ የኢትዮጵያም ሕዝብ የበቃ ትምህርት ካላገኘ ወደፊት ያለውን የኢንተርናሲዮናል ትግል አለመቻሉን ግርማዊነትም በጥልቁ የሚገነዘባቸው ጉዳዮች ስለሆኑ ለማስረዳት የሚያሹ ነገሮች አይደሉም። ይሁን እንጂ የትምህርቱን ሥራ ለመምራት በአውሮፓ ትምህርት ቤት ካደጉትና ለዚሁ ጉዳይ ጣዕም ካላቸው ኢትዮጵያውያን መካከል በመመረጥ ካልሆነ ሌላ መንገድ እንደሌለው ይመስለኛል። ለዚህ ሥራ የሚታጨቱ ሰዎች ሁሉ ዛሬ በብርቱ ኃላፊነት ላይ ያሉ ብቻ መሆናቸውም የማይጠረጠር ነገር ነው። ስለዚህ ግርማዊነትም በጉዳዩ አስበበት የሚያስፈልገውን ሳክሪፊስ አድርጎ ለትምህርት ሻንሽ እንዲሰጥ ቢታላቅ ትህትና የማስታወሰው ጉዳይ ነው። ከሹመት በኩል ሲታይ የትምህርት ሚኒስቴር በማናቸውም አገር ቢሆን የሚያንጸባርቅ ቦታ አይደለምና ብዙ(አስፒራ)ደጅ የሚጠናለት አያገኝም። ስለዚህ ለሥራው ኃላፊው ከሆኑት መካከል እንኳን በኤጎይዝም አኳሆን ሲታይ ብዙ ሰዎች የሚመኙት ሥራ አይደለም። በዚህ ጉዳይ ግርማዊነትም ምን ያህል እንዳሰበበት ስለማውቅ በጃንሆይ ሐሳብ የምችለው ሥራ መስሎ ከታየ ወደትምህርት ሚኒስቴር ተዛውሮ ለመስራት በደስታ የማደርገው ነው።

In order to achieve the objective of the Ministry of Education, it requires an intense activity on a daily basis. Since your majesty

⁹¹⁹ Ibid.

fully understands that one of the priorities of the Imperial Ethiopian Government is education, your majesty's reformist plan cannot be fruitful unless prospective experts administer it, and the Ethiopian people cannot withstand the international competition without modern education, there is no need to explain these. Yet, with regard to the administrators of education, I think, there is no alternative other than individuals who underwent their formal education since their childhood at European schools. There is no doubt that each nominee for the post has already accepted great government responsibilities. Therefore, I insist on your majesty to give priority to education. Seen from the privilege of appointment and even personal ambition, the Ministry of Education is not an attractive position to which claimants would aspire. Therefore, cognizant of the fact that your majesty has thought deeply about it, I am glad to be transferred to the Ministry of Education, if your majesty believes that I am efficient.⁹²⁰

Though in the negative, Yılma hadn't even had the Emperor's response without more ado. He stayed in the acting position even after Emmanuel Abraham came back from United States and persisted in his responsibility with the zeal of an enthusiast.⁹²¹ Among his accomplishments, for instance, the maintenance of classrooms as well as dormitories of Minilik II School and its development (both physical and institutional) to a Secondary School level are noteworthy. In this regard, new kitchen and dining room for students were built. Furthermore, 250 beds with equal number of mattress and about 1000 blankets were granted to the school.⁹²² His decisive position in the Ministry of Finance seems to have helped Yılma to put his plans into practice effectively and timely. Indeed, remarkable job was done within few months.⁹²³ However, opinions differed as to Yılma's activities in the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts. As Täklä Şadiq's eulogized Yılma, Emmanuel Abraham criticized him. The latter wrote:

⁹²⁰ Yılma Dêréssa to Emperor Hailä Sillassé, June 28, 1945, Folder No. A6042-6070, ŠM, MOFED.

⁹²¹ Emmanuel, 55.

⁹²² Yılma Dêréssa to Emperor Hailä Sillassé, June 28, 1945, Folder No. A6042-6070, ŠM, MOFED.

⁹²³ Täklä Şadiq, *Yä hñywät*..., 123.

Having completed my assignment, I came back after four months. While all the other acting heads relinquished to the incumbents the posts they had been holding, the Vice Minister of Finance conceived the notion that he had been appointed to the Ministry of Education and was not acting head and, since he was a Vice Minister while Amanuel was a Director-General, he was his superior. When he realized that his claim was unacceptable to me and that His Majesty frowned on it, he stopped going to the Ministry of Education and, calling the Chief Secretary to the Ministry of Finance, proceeded to give him orders. He also went around to the Addis Ababa schools and gave in person directives to the headmasters and the employees. But the directives and orders had to come to me for execution and I countermanded them. He concluded that his pretensions could not last and gave up after about six months. Nevertheless, he never stopped trying to hamper my work in the Ministry of Education and in the other departments in which I served until both of us left government service in 1974. Even though his opposition, not motivated by the national interest but impelled by personal feelings did no damage to my work, It brought on me a sense of sadness.⁹²⁴

Contrary to what Emmanuel narrated, Täklä Şadiq represented Yılma as determined and visionary Ethiopian. This was probably because Täklä Şadiq had a fair chance to witness closely Yılma's considerable accomplishments and farsighted plans in the Ministry.⁹²⁵

In his 19 pages memorandum, indeed, Yılma prepared a detailed plan for the Ministry of Education and for schools especially at Addis Ababa. The plan incorporated the general and specific conditions of modern education in 1944/45 first in Addis Ababa. Having sensed his information gap between the status of education in Addis Ababa and provinces, he proposed to conduct similar research in the provinces and revealed that he needed a maximum of 6 weeks time to do so.⁹²⁶ In his broad memorandum on education, Yılma underlined the need to develop a national plan for modern education as early as 1945. The establishment of particular schools, he underlined, in response to public demands here and there cannot meet the intended goal.

⁹²⁴ Emmanuel, 55.

⁹²⁵ Täklä Şadiq, *Yä'hîywät...*, 119-120.

⁹²⁶ Yılma Dêrêssa to Emperor Hailä Sillassé, June 28, 1945, Folder No. A6042-6070, ŞM, MOFED.

Elaborating his opinion, he argued that schools in Ethiopia had no model to pursue. No selection of textbooks was made. Though the majority of school edifices were well-built, most were underdeveloped in terms of teachers, books, furniture and institutional organization. He attributed these problems to lack of financial resource and institutional structure. As the authority of directors in their respective schools was limited, for instance, school personnel tended to obey the order of officials at the Ministry; hence, bureaucratic red-tape hampered even the routine activities of schools.⁹²⁷

In order to alleviate these situations, Yīlma proposed a short term program. Hence, he focused mainly on the strengthening of preceding schools in all over the country and the establishing of new elementary schools. In order to offer a real solution for the existing problems, he, for example, examined the conditions of 10 schools including the Theological College, the Teachers Training and the *Īlēgé Mänän* Girls' School. He also devoted some three pages to the urgent need for school curriculum from primary to tertiary levels, the inevitability of the foreign language as a medium of instruction in Ethiopian educational system until the development of materials in Amharic, the types of books that the Ethiopian government must prepare (he recommended the promotion of industrial and agricultural knowledge in the texts) and the organizational structure of the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts.⁹²⁸

No matter how eager Yīlma had been to serve in the education sector, the Emperor ignored his appliance and obliged to stay at the Ministry of Finance until 1949. Tāklā Şadiq suspected that Emmanuel, in collaboration with *Şāhafé Tī'zaz Wäldä Giorgis*, resisted against Yīlma's deeds and programs even after the latter stopped going to his office at the Ministry of Education.⁹²⁹ But

⁹²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹²⁹ Tāklā Şadiq, *Yä'hīywät...*, 94.

Yilma's relation with education wouldn't last; first he was appointed member of Board of Education in September 1948 and President of the Board of Hailä Sillassé I University about which I will briefly discuss in the latter chapter.⁹³⁰

Having played a leading role in the establishment and development of the Ministry of Finance for more than seven years, not to forget his achievement in other public assignments, Yilma was transferred to the Ministry of Commerce and industry on 7th July, 1949 with a rank of full minister. Besides, he was appointed the President of Planning Board.⁹³¹ Yilma's appointment, like the 1942 promotion, was not a specific public incident and it was one of the renowned *Šum-Šir* events in the Imperial Government of Ethiopia.⁹³²

In summary, this chapter has touched upon biographically two aspects of historical development in 1940s. On the one hand, it discussed about an individual role in different economic, diplomatic and social services. In this regard, it has given the details of Yilma Déréssa contributions to Ethiopia's resistance against British influence particularly on budgeting and currency. Then, it attempted to examine Yilma's public life and accomplishments after the Ministry of Finance was established and relatively consolidated. The chapter has also dealt with some major contributions of Yilma Déréssa beyond his prior duties and responsibilities in the Ministry of Finance in 1945 and 1946. No doubt, in all these experiences, Yilma's training in modern education and his individual competence in the fields of economics and diplomacy seem to have played important roles. On the other hand, out of necessity, the political system appeared

⁹³⁰ Gäbra Wäld İngīda Wärq to Yilma Déréssa, September 29, 1948, Personal File of Yilma Déréssa, HO, MOFED

⁹³¹ Negarit Gazeta, 8th Year No. 12, 27th August, 1949; Sälāmon Gäbrāmariam to Yilma Déréssa, Hamle 6, 1962 E.C. Folder No, 1/1-y Personal File, MOFA.

⁹³² According to the government newspaper, Emperor appointed some 18 other top officials to various positions on 2nd July, 1949. *Addis Zāmān*: Hamlé 2, 1941 E.C.

to have offered and denied opportunities to skilled functionaries like Yïlma Déréssa to make individual as well as collective contributions to the interests of the state.

Chapter Six

Yilma Déréssa in Commerce and Diplomacy

(1949-1960)

Having left the very Ministry that he established and built up for eight years since 1941, Yilma was assigned first to an institution and range of activities about which he was relatively strange. In these years, Yilma was preoccupied increasingly with issues related mainly to government external trade and foreign affairs. What makes his public life during these years different from the previous period basically is that there weren't much 'beginnings' or 'foundations' to which his name is directly or indirectly associated. Still, there were few developments and institutions inducted due to which he got appropriate credit. This chapter is divided into two sections each dealing with Yilma's public activities in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (1949-53), in the Washington DC Legation of Ethiopian Government and finally in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1953-1960).

6.1. Yilma in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (1949-1953)

Yilma, like other new appointee officials in the Imperial Government, took up his new post on July 8, 1949.⁹³³ Narrating anachronistically, he claimed that one of his prior missions in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry was to strengthen the departments with educated man power.⁹³⁴ He was also engaged in securing the support of the World Bank to the modernizing efforts of the Imperial Government of Ethiopia. Furthermore, traveling to the Netherlands, he must have played a leading role in bringing foreign investment into Ethiopia that led to the

⁹³³ *Addis Zāmān*: Hamlé 9, 1941 E.C..

⁹³⁴ The Ministry, not to forget the finance, administrative and Record offices, consisted of department of foreign trade, department of domestic trade, department of industry, department of legislation, department of statistics, and department of Planning. Yilma Déréssa Prison Testament.

establishments of a sugar factory in Ethiopia in 1950s. At home, Yilma at least oversaw the industry exhibition held in November 1951, one of the major activities of the Ministry as per the powers and duties proclaimed in 1943. The major objective of this section, therefore, is to sketch out Yilma Déréssa's deeds in the Ministry until he was sent to Washington DC as Ethiopia's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in the United States of America and the United Nations in 1953.

Driven probably by his passionate conviction that modern institutions had to be staffed with educated personnel, Yilma employed five university and ten commercial school young graduates and assigned them in different departments of the Ministry. These employees would make significant contributions to the institution in such critical period when skilled man power was needed badly.⁹³⁵ Given his particular liking for educated personnel, of course, it is no wonder that he began his new job with this undertaking. Yilma also appears to be partly instrumental in the establishment of statistics department and the bureau gathered considerable data on the contemporary socioeconomic situations of the country. The other accomplishment on which Yilma made a claim in his prison testament was his contribution in intensifying the consultative and operational services that the legislative department of the Ministry had offered to merchants and factory owners. These services paved the way for the development of Commercial Code in Ethiopia.⁹³⁶

The Planning Board, though its operational origin went back to the Contractual Agreement between Perry Fellows and the Ethiopian Government in 1947, it was during Yilma's tenure in the Ministry that it commenced research works to facilitate the expansion of modern trade and

⁹³⁵ Yilma Déréssa Prison Testament.

⁹³⁶ *Ibid.*, *Negarit Gazeta* 19th Year No.3, 5th Commercial Code of the Empire of Ethiopia, Proclamation No. 166 of 1960, May 1960.

industry in Ethiopia. A couple of years ago, as discussed earlier, the Ethiopian Government employed Perry Fellows as Director of Planning Board and Industrial and Economic Advisor with the annual salary of US \$ 12,000.⁹³⁷ Hence, being the official director of planning for Imperial Government of Ethiopia, he had made plans for the budding industry and trade. Considered as vital instruments to the development of these sectors, priority was given to the establishment and expansion of electricity, communications infrastructure, finance and banking institutions.⁹³⁸ However, except working out for particular ministries and departments, no central planning institution became a duly functional until late 1950s.⁹³⁹

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Yılma had played an important role in availing Ethiopia for membership in the Bretton Woods system in the late 1940s.⁹⁴⁰ In May 1950, the delegates of the World Bank came to Ethiopia and undertook official visit in different provinces of the country and Asab, the then sea port of Eritrea. Yılma was working with them during their stay in Addis Ababa.⁹⁴¹ In the subsequent years, loan agreements and development endeavors had been made. For instance, a loan agreement was concluded between Imperial Ethiopian Government and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) in September 1950 involving a principal amount of U.S. \$ 5 million to be used in financing the foreign exchange costs of improving the country's motor road system. Interest for the loan was 3% with a

⁹³⁷ Contract between Perry Fellows and Ras Emiru Haila Silasse, April 23 1947, Folder No. A 6071-6107, ŠM, MOFED.

⁹³⁸ Yılma Déréssa Prison Testament.

⁹³⁹ Ašānañ Šīfāraw, "Yä'ikonomi plan bä'itoyopiya mäčēna Īndēt tājāmārā, " in *Kä'dihināt wädä Līmat:- Īwqātīn lätīwīd Mastälalāf, Bä'forām for sošal städīs Yä'wīyīyīt mādrāk lay Yä'qārābu Šihufoč*, ed. Šiferaw Bekele, (Addis Ababa: Forum for Social Studies, 2006 E.C.), 387; Šiferaw Jammo, "An Overview of the Economy 1941-74, " in *An Economic History of Modern Ethiopia, Vol. 1: The Imperial Era 1941-74*, ed. Šiferaw Bekele(Dakar: Codesria, 1995), .8.

⁹⁴⁰ Yılma Déréssa Prison Testament.

⁹⁴¹ He also dined and wine with them. It is interesting to refer to the fact that the total cost of the dinner amounted to Eth \$ 444 and the expense was totally covered by the government. Letter from Gétahun Täsäma to Minasé Läma, Dated May 17, 1950, Personal File of Yılma Déréssa, HO, MOFED. *Addis Zāmān*: Gīnbot 5, 1942 E.C. .

commission charge of 1%. The loan agreement provided for the establishment of a Highway Authority, with a Management was selected by the Government of Ethiopia in cooperation with the World Bank. Local currency costs of the national road program to be met by the Ethiopian Government. Aggregate expenditures under the building program during the twenty year period would thus amount to at least Eth\$ 120 million of which about Eth\$ 12 million or about 10% would be provided by the IBRD.⁹⁴²

Coincident with the signing of a U.S. \$ 5 million highway improvement loan, the IBRD provided U.S. \$ 2 million for an Ethiopian Development Bank. The purpose of the new institution was to further agricultural and industrial development in Ethiopia by providing a source of small loans to farmers and industrialists. To finance the foreign exchange costs of the Development bank's operations, local capital to be provided by the Ethiopian Government up to Eth \$ 5 million and by the merger with the new institution of the previously existing Agricultural Bank whose capital approximated Eth \$ 1 million. While negotiating the loan for highways Yilma asked the IBRD to consider making a similar arrangement for the telecommunications service. The Bank agreed and mounted a survey mission and on the recommendation of that mission the "Imperial Board of Telecommunications of Ethiopia" was established.⁹⁴³ To that effect, a third loan agreement between the Imperial Ethiopian Government and the IBRD was signed in February 1951, extending a sum of U.S. \$ 1.5 million for the rehabilitation and extension of the country's telecommunications system. Approximately, the same amount in Ethiopian currency was estimated to be acquired to finance the local costs of this undertaking.⁹⁴⁴ On its part, the Imperial Government allocated Eth \$ 24 million to the maintenance of roads the work of which was

⁹⁴² Foreign Contractual Obligations of Ethiopia, Not Dated, Folder No. C 718-749, *ŠM*, MOFED; Informants: Bättru Admassé and Asfaw Damtë.

⁹⁴³ Gabriel Tewodros, "Recollections about *Lidj* Yilma Deressa", In Sophia Yilma's Possession.

⁹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

planned to be implemented within three consecutive years. Likewise, Eth \$ 6 and 3 million were allotted as additional capital for Agricultural Bank of Ethiopia and the maintenances and expansion of telecommunications and radio transmissions respectively.⁹⁴⁵

The foundation of Grain Corporation, a successor organization to the Ethiopian National Corporation, was another activity in which Yilma was engaged closely. "Created soon after 1941 by Mäkonñin Habtä-Wäld, the then Minister of Commerce and Agriculture, the Corporation made substantial profits from the sale of cereals to war-torn Europe in the years between the liberation and the end of World War Two."⁹⁴⁶ After the end of the War, the demand for wheat, Ethiopia's major export item at that time, declined drastically due to its poor quality and the country suffered a financial loss in the international market. Therefore, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, convinced farmers to produce oilseeds to substitute wheat as a leading export item. Accordingly, attempt was made to tackle the problem in the balance of trade.⁹⁴⁷ Indeed, "economic development in Ethiopia since

⁹⁴⁵ *Addis Zāmān*: Mägabīt 22, 1943 E.C.

⁹⁴⁶ Bahru, *A History of...*, 197.

⁹⁴⁷ For the Ethiopian year ending September 1949, as Marcus numerated the details of the country's import-export trade, Ethiopia's imports amounted to ES90,984,804 (at this time, the Ethiopian dollar was worth forty U.S. cents), of which Italy, India, Japan, the United States, and the United Kingdom accounted for almost two-thirds; exports were ES77,191,200, four-fifths of which went to Aden (for forwarding), Eritrea, America, Italy, and Great Britain. Yielding ES17,004,350, coffee was the most important export commodity, but hides, skins, grains, peas and beans, and oilseeds brought in approximately ES40,000,000. The government's budget was ES60,000,000, of which ES24,000,000 came from customs duties, and the rest mostly from indirect taxes, although there was a personal business and income tax that produced some revenues. The revival of the economies of western Europe and the increased demand for primary commodities stimulated by the Korean War made 1950 a good year for Ethiopia. Hides, skins, grains, peas and beans, and oilseeds brought in ES30,300,000, but the value of coffee almost doubled to ES32,538,000, even as the quantity shipped only grew from 17,828.8 to 21,151.6 metric tons. Revenues from duties consequently rose from ES24,000,000 to ES31,650,000.⁵⁸ For 1951, the value of coffee soared to ES56,500,000, accounting for 50.5% of all Ethiopian exports; hides and skins were now 28% of the total, but cereals and oilseeds had dropped to 21.5%. By 1952, coffee, now 54.9% of all exports, was valued at ES83,000,000; the country's total trade was ES158,000,000, which yielded customs revenues amounting to ES42,989,981, against ES36,181,047 for the year before.⁵⁹ 1953 was a big year for the Ethiopian economy: the coffee crop had grown to 37,000 tons, which sold at higher world prices for ES2,000,000, nearly 65% of the value of all exports. "This record crop benefitted several groups-land owners, small farmers, farm laborers traders and exporters, but mostly the government," which had raised export taxes several times, "skimming off" most of the extra purchasing power

the 1950s had a positive influence on the country's foreign trade, as reflected in an increase in levels of exports, both in volume and value terms."⁹⁴⁸

In order to assure the quality of these exportable items, cleaning mills were planted at the outlets of the oilseeds production districts. The Grain Board was established in 1950 to administer the marketing of the country's exportable grains and Yilma was appointed president of the Board.⁹⁴⁹

The Board was said to be an autonomous agency of the government and its members constituted the Ministers of Agriculture, Commerce, Industry, and Finance, the Governor of the State Bank of Ethiopia. The purpose for which the Grain Board was created and the objectives toward which its powers would be utilized were to maximum the export of grains, flour, pulses and oil seeds from Ethiopia at economic prices, to protect the foreign exchange position of the nation, to improve the quality and grade of grains, flour, pulses and oilseeds were exported from Ethiopia. So as to achieve these objectives, the Grain Board was empowered to regulate the prices in Ethiopian dollars at which grain, flour and oil seeds were purchased and sold for export or for domestic consumption. The Board was also authorized to designate countries to which grain and oil seeds might or might not be exported and to counsel with the Minister of Agriculture with respect to the advice to be given by the Ministry of Agriculture to grain, pulses and oil seeds producers concerning quantity and types of seeds to be planted and general planting and marketing problems.⁹⁵⁰ Later on, accordingly, Grain Board regulations were proclaimed under Yilma's authority.⁹⁵¹

and at the same time increasing its revenue" from export duties threefold. Marcus, *The Politics of ...*, 95-96. Yilma Dêrêssa Prison Testament.

⁹⁴⁸ Shiferaw Jammo, 41.

⁹⁴⁹ *Negarit Gazeta*, 9th Year No. 9, 29th May, 1950.

⁹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵¹ *Negarit Gazeta*, 10th Year No. 12, 27th August, 1951.

Furthermore, so as to maintain the quality of exportable coffee, a quality control department was established in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The Ministry also encouraged investors in the sector to install coffee cleaning mills. During Yilma's tenure, the Coffee Cleaning and Grading Proclamation of 1952 was also declared, the purpose of which was to raise the quality of Ethiopian Coffee and increase the demand thereof by way of establishing specifications. After the effective date of this Proclamation, no coffee would be exported from the country unless it had been certified to be cleaned and graded coffee by a licensed coffee cleaner and grader; provided that the provision of this Proclamation shall not prohibit the export of coffee cleaned through experience in traditional methods, on license, without mechanical help.⁹⁵²

Probably, one of the major developments in early 1950s to which foundation Yilma might contribute substantially was the Wānġi Sugar Factory. It is noted that "the concession leasing an area of 5,000 hectares for a sugar-cane plantation and sugar factory was signed between the Ethiopian Government and HVA in June 1951."⁹⁵³ Though difficult to trace the account of Yilma's official visit to Holland in June and July 1951, being a Minister of Commerce and Industry, it will perhaps be argued that the establishment of sugar factory would be one of the agenda during his trip. A document at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reveals that Yilma was chief for Goodwill Mission to Holland.⁹⁵⁴ As he was also subject to treaties and agreements concluded by the Imperial Government with foreign governments, it sounds plausible to suppose that Yilma would play valuable role in bringing the Dutch company into Ethiopia. Eight months after Yilma's visit, Mr. B. Drakestone, Netherlands' Envoy Extraordinary and Minister

⁹⁵² *Ibid.*

⁹⁵³ Bahru, "Environment and Capital: Notes for a History of the Wonji-Shoa Sugar Estate(1951-1974)" in *Society, State and History Selected Essays*, (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2008), 125.

⁹⁵⁴ Folder No, 1/1-y, Yilma Dêrêssa's Personal File, MOFA.

Plenipotentiary in Ethiopia arrived at Addis Ababa in March 1952.⁹⁵⁵ Furthermore, given Yilma's repetitive connection with the Dutch even in the 1960s, it is logical to assume that he was occupied with the economic relations between the two countries.⁹⁵⁶ Besides, the setting up of cigarette factory in September 1951, though sources are scanty to claim Yilma's particular feat in it, could not be a mere coincidence with his tenure in the Ministry.⁹⁵⁷

Another activity of achievement to which Yilma contributed, indeed, jointly with his associates in the Ministry was the inauguration of exhibitions of trade and industry. According to article 32(d) of an Order to define the powers and duties of Ministers, the Minister of Commerce and Industry in accordance with the law may organize exhibitions for the purpose of showing to the public how trade and industry have developed in the country.⁹⁵⁸ Therefore, preparation to induct an exhibition of new type in the country was begun seven months earlier with the selection of vast area for the intended purpose in the southwestern quarter of the capital in June 1951. The Imperial government provided 260,000 square meters of exhibition space at the vicinity of the then Air Port along the "Gimma Road". The better part of the area was allotted to items (cattle and plants of economic importance) to be exhibited by the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry of Education and Fine Arts was expected to demonstrate its accomplishments especially in the

⁹⁵⁵ Jon Abbink, however, remarked that "a Dutch embassy was established in Ethiopia only in 1960; prior to that there had been a lower-level diplomatic mission since 1950." See Abbink, "Relations with the Netherlands", in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, eds. Alessandro Bausi and Sighbert Uhlig. Vol. 5, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014), 460b. *Addis Zāmān*: Hamlē 27, 1943 E.C.; *Addis Zāmān*: Yäkatit 29, 1944 E.C.

⁹⁵⁶ Informant: Sofia Yilma

⁹⁵⁷ *Addis Zāmān*: Mäskärām 4, 1944 E.C.

⁹⁵⁸ *Negarit Gazeta*, 2nd Year No. 5. An Order to Define the Powers and Duties of Our Ministers (Order No. 1 of 1943), January 29, 1943.

expansion of modern education all over the country.⁹⁵⁹ Foreign companies were also invited to participate in the fair through their respective legations.⁹⁶⁰

The Exhibition was officially opened, predictably, by the Emperor on 20th November, 1951. He was accompanied by dignitaries and high ranking government officials. Yīlma and his deputy, Getahun Tāsāma, guided them through the exhibition. In this trade, industry, agricultural and education fair, several public and private enterprises displayed their products and samples of their workshops. Among the private business firms, not few were owned partly or fully by foreigners. It can perhaps be argued that native private business were insignificant in the market value as compared to the firms owned by the expatriates. They are mainly confined to petite businesses in hotel, locally produced alcohols, leatherworks, weaving, cotton produces and various hand crafts.⁹⁶¹ Yet, even industries run by foreigners in Ethiopia were underdeveloped and their contributions to the country's economy were very small, if not nil. For instance, Eshetu Chole(1995) underlined that "industry constituted only 1% of the Net National Product in 1950."⁹⁶² While in the Ministry, Yīlma would be engaged in the country's policy of import substitution as far as textile products are concerned.⁹⁶³

Meanwhile, besides his responsibilities in the country's commerce and industry, Yīlma led Ethiopian delegation to the Reparation Conference in Rome, Italy. Based on the Paris Peace Treaty signed in February 1947, "Italy had been obligated to pay war reparations to Ethiopia. With a view to reaching an agreement as to how payment should be effected, the Ethiopian

⁹⁵⁹ It was estimated that there were more than 600 schools throughout the country. *Addis Zāmān*: Sāné 16, 1943 E.C.

⁹⁶⁰ Though the exhibition was scheduled to be inaugurated on November 18 1951, it appears to be opened two days later. *Ibid.*; *Addis Zāmān*: Hidar 14, 1944 E.C.

⁹⁶¹ *Addis Zāmān*: Hidar 14, 1944 E.C..

⁹⁶² Eshetu Chole, "Running to Keep in the Same Place: Industrialization 1941-1974" in *An Economic History of Modern Ethiopia, Vol. 1: The Imperial Era 1941-74*, ed. Shiferaw Bekele (Dakar: Codesria, 1995), 204.

⁹⁶³ *Addis Zāmān*: Māgabit 12, 1945 E.C..

government, at the invitation of the Italian government, had sent a five-man delegation to Rome in the middle of October, 1952 and spent three months in negotiation until January 1953.”⁹⁶⁴ The negotiation was tense. Giampaolo Calchi Novati (1996) explains:

*The Peace Treaty did not stipulate how much Ethiopia could ask in claims, but Article 74 did establish a ceiling of 25 million dollars (15 billion lire at current exchange rates) in war reparations. In the event that Ethiopian claims exceeded that amount, Ethiopia would have the right to confiscate the assets of private Italians resident in its territory as allowed under Article 79. The Ethiopian government would be obliged to give back the excess if the value of the assets confiscated was more than the difference between the sum assigned as war reparations and the amount legitimately claimed by Ethiopia. For their part, the Ethiopians tried to separate the question of reparations from Italian claims, while Rome insisted that they be rolled into one amount "not only to protect the interests of those entitled to rights, but also to comply with the stipulation of the Peace Treaty, and even more, to improve relations between the two countries."*⁹⁶⁵

The sum of \$25,000,000 awarded to Ethiopia in reparation in line with the awards to Albania (\$5 million), Greece (\$105 million) and Yugoslavia (\$125 million).⁹⁶⁶ Taking into account of the money from reparation, a preliminary study was conducted to build the Qoqa dam while Yilma was in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.⁹⁶⁷ Between 1957 and 1960, the barrage was constructed across the River Awaš to provide hydroelectric power. Financial capital for the project was obtained from Italy through the War Reparations Fund (*Birr* 30,641,000).⁹⁶⁸

Despite Yilma's and his contemporaries common courtesy not to contend personal achievements in their public responsibilities, it sounds reasonable to argue that Yilma played a valuable role in

⁹⁶⁴ Emmanuel, 89.

⁹⁶⁵ Haile Muluken, "A Diplomatic History of Ethio-Italian Relations, Ca. 1941-1991" (PhD Dissertation in History, Addis Ababa University, 2014), 338-339; Giampaolo Calchi Novati, "Re-establishing Italo-Ethiopian Relations after the War: Old Prejudices and New Policies," *Northeast African Studies*, New Series, 3, No. 1 (1996):38.

⁹⁶⁶ Spencer, 183. Emmanuel, 89.

⁹⁶⁷ Yilma Déréssa Prison Testament.

⁹⁶⁸ Haile Muluken, 345-346.; Alain Gascon, "Qoqa," in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 4 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 299a.

these activities for he included most of them in his prison testament and those are in full agreement with oral sources.⁹⁶⁹ The Development Bank of Ethiopia, in this regard, is a case in point. In response to the precondition set out by IBRD (with which Yilma was negotiating in May 1950) before its US \$2 million grant, the Ethiopian government decided to convert the newly established Agricultural and Commercial Bank into the Development Bank of Ethiopia. The Bank started business in May 1951.⁹⁷⁰ By and large, as a higher official in the Ministry, during his tenure until July 1953, Yilma would oversee the major activities of the institution such as collating and publishing statistics relating to trade and industry. Besides, in consultation with the Ministry of Finance would make proposals for the control of prices and, if approval would be given, ensured the proper carrying out of these proposals.⁹⁷¹

6.2. Yilma in Diplomacy and Foreign Affairs (1953-1960)

As discussed intermittently in this study, Yilma's career in foreign affairs had begun since 1933. He worked in the Department of League of Nations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for two years until the Italian invasion. In June 1936, he was engaged in diplomatic activities as he was a principal delegate of the "Western [Oromo] Confederation" to the British Consulate at

⁹⁶⁹ Informants: Bulča Dāmāqsa, Sofia Yilma; List of Ethiopian Government Agencies and Enterprises over which Yilma Presided In Yāmanā Īḡigu's possession, New York; Yilma Déréssa Prison Testament; , *Negarit Gazeta*, 11th Year No. 5, A Proclamation to Prohibit Export of Uncleaned and Ungraded Coffee, No 121 of 1952 January 30, 1952.

⁹⁷⁰ "The Bank was operating independently of the State Bank of Ethiopia and providing medium and long-term credit for industrial and agricultural development. The Development Bank had a long gestation and was preceded by two institutions. In 1945 the government established an Agricultural Bank for the purpose of assisting small holders whose cattle were ravaged during the Italian occupation. In 1949 this bank was converted into an Agricultural and Commercial Bank but was overtaken by events before it could start operating seriously. In 1950, the World Bank agreed to provide US \$ 2 million to finance the foreign exchange costs of development projects." Befekadu, "The Development of..." 240; *Addis Zāmān*: Gīnbot 5, 1942 E.C.; *Negarit Gazeta*, 10th Year No. 7, 19th March, 1953. List of Ethiopian Government Agencies and Enterprises over which Yilma Presided, In Yāmanā Īḡigu's possession, New York; Yilma Déréssa Prison Testament.

⁹⁷¹ *Addis Zāmān*: Māgabit 12, 1945 E.C.; Hamlé 27, 1943 E.C.; Māskārām 25, 1944 E.C.; *Negarit Gazeta*, 2nd Year No. 5, An Order to Define the Powers and Duties of Our Ministers (Order No. 1 of 1943), January 29, 1943.

Gambella.” After seven years, the Ethiopian government sent Yilma to Hot Spring, Virginia supposedly to participate in an international conference on food, as discussed earlier, but in reality to request for U.S. lend-lease assistance which later helped the work of the Ministry of Finance greatly. Yilma accompanied Emperor Hailä Sillassé in his trip to Cairo in February 1945 chiefly as an interpreter. After a long period of time, he led Ethiopian delegation to the Reparation Conference in Rome, Italy in 1952.

Both in the literature and oral sources, Yilma’s transfer from Ministry of Commerce and Industry to Washington DC as a diplomat in 1953 is attributed to his quarrel with *Şāhafé Tizaz Wäldä Giorgis Wäldä Yohannis*.⁹⁷² If this account is true, Yilma was in trouble with the most powerful statesman in Ethiopia. Indeed, Yilma had no liking for officials without proper training of modern education.⁹⁷³ Given the power of the latter, obviously, the alleged disagreement between these state officials was not a clash of equals. *Şāhfé Tī’zaz Wäldä Giorgis*, in post-liberation Ethiopian government, was one of the most powerful politicians in Ethiopia for a decade and half since 1941.⁹⁷⁴ Hence, for emerging statesman like Yilma, any quarrel with Wäldä Giorgis might cost the royal favor, to say the least.

In this regard, one of my informants recounts that Yilma was sent to the United States because of his harsh criticism in informal chatting during leasuretime against Wäldä Giorgis’s lack of training in modern education.⁹⁷⁵ Not far from the issue of training, another key informant states that Yilma complained to the Emperor that he was not in good terms with authorities like Wäldä Giorgis as he wished works to be done in a modern way. The Emperor, not to offend the *Şāhafé*

⁹⁷² Clapham, 115; Informants: Bulča Dāmāqsa and Ijigu Dāmässé

⁹⁷³ Almost all my informants remark emphatically that Yilma always preferred college graduate technocrats to self educated civil servants.

⁹⁷⁴ Mekonnen, 91.

⁹⁷⁵ Informant: Ijigu Dāmässé

Tizaz, is said to have decided to send Yilma abroad where his educational background would fit him perfectly.⁹⁷⁶

Nevertheless, these explanations need to be scrutinized carefully against the diplomatic assignments that Yilma had taken on since 1953. At this juncture, Marcus clearly noted, USA had two strategic interests in the Middle East after World War Two- to control Arab oil and to keep the region free of Soviet influence. The primary role on the African side of the Red Sea had been assigned to Egypt, as President Nasser balked at the USA's scheme, however, Washington DC strengthened its relationship with Addis Ababa since 1952. This new relationship yielded an agreement to provide technical assistance (under the Point Four Program), followed in May 1953 by a military assistance pact and a treaty governing the use of U.S. facilities in Asmara and Massawa.⁹⁷⁷ As the dawn of 1950s witnessed the escalation of Middle East political tension the effect of which obliged Ethiopia's involvement, therefore, the appointment of Yilma as Ethiopia's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in the United States and United Nations might not be a decision to ouster him from state politics.

Furthermore, Yilma's tenure in the Ethiopian legation in Washington needs to be examined partly along with USA's new concern about "how racial tensions in America featured in Soviet propaganda"⁹⁷⁸ in 1950s. Here, Edward Kissi's argument deserves quotation:

Ethiopia's status as an uncolonized African kingdom had made it a very powerful symbol of racial pride for Americans of African heritage. Thus, Eisenhower's concern to counter criticism of the United States at home and abroad as a racist nation required a positive and even deferential relationship with Ethiopia. By showing respect for a black African leader who was also revered

⁹⁷⁶ Informant: Bulča Dāmāqsa

⁹⁷⁷ Marcus, *The Politics of.....*5.

⁹⁷⁸ Edward Kissi, "Paradoxes of American Development Diplomacy in the early Cold War Period," *Past and Present*, no.215(May 2012):275.

*by black Americans, American policy makers hoped to reassure America's black population that only the American way of life could guarantee them racial equality through a gradual but progressive reform of the country's racial problems. Arguably, racial sensitivity also shaped the deferential US approach to the implementation of its Point Four development programme in Ethiopia.*⁹⁷⁹

As the discussion on the significance of Point Four and Yilma's relation with the African intellectuals in Washington and its environs in 1950s reveal, his transfer from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to the Ethiopian legation in Washington seems to be more of a result of diplomatic strategy of the Imperial Government than a personal discord between Yilma Déréssa and Šāhafé Ti'zaz Wäldä-Giorgis.

Yilma was appointed ambassador of Ethiopia to the United States on 8th July, 1953 and presented his letter of credence to President Dwight Eisenhower on September 26, 1953.⁹⁸⁰ The political and economic cooperation that had steadily developed between the two countries and particularly, the Korean War and the federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia were the major topics of discussion between Yilma and President Eisenhower upon the occasion of the presentation of his letter of credence.⁹⁸¹ Between his departure from Addis Ababa with his nine family members on 17th August, 1953 and his arrival at Washington on 2nd September, 1953, however, he had taken on a special diplomatic assignment as a chairman of Ethiopia's Economic Mission to Yugoslavia.⁹⁸²

⁹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 275-276.

⁹⁸⁰ Yilma Déréssa's Personal File, Folder, 1/1-y, MOFA

⁹⁸¹ Press Release from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Imperial Government of Ethiopia, Dated September 26, 1953, 1/1-y, Yilma Déréssa's Personal File, MOFA.

⁹⁸² Unlike the assumption of an expert in the area, and indeed, also he is my informant, the earliest contact with Yugoslavia to that effect, therefore, seems to have been made by this mission. Ašānañ Šilāraw, 387 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Washington Ethiopian Embassy, Telegram No. 5867/24/45, 15th August, 1953, Folder No. 1/1-y, Yilma Déréssa's Personal File, MOFA.

Arriving at Athens, Greece on 20th August, 1953, Yilma continued his travel to Yugoslavia probably with Araya Oqubagzi, a Director General in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The Ethiopian legation at Athens was already notified to facilitate Yilma's journey to Belgrade in advance. It appears that Yilma presented Emperor Hailä-Sillassé's letter to President Joseph Broz Tito that notified him Ethiopia's desire of strengthening the subsisting bonds of friendship and developing the economic and commercial relations between the two countries. Hence, the Emperor stated that he had seen fit to designate and appoint Yilma as plenipotentiary and chairman of Ethiopia's economic mission to Yugoslavia. The mission was invested with all requisite full powers and authority to negotiate, sign and ratify treaties, conventions, agreements, protocols and acts negotiated by it.⁹⁸³ This economic mission seems to have eventually paved the way for Yugoslavia's assistance to Ethiopia especially in the preparation of the consecutive Five-Year Plans since 1958.⁹⁸⁴

At Washington it was *ras* Īmīru Hailä-Silassie whom Yilma replaced as an ambassador. Since September 1953 until December 1957, living mainly at 2134 Kalorama Road first with his entire family (as the Ethiopian Ambassador did not have a residence at that time), Yilma actively engaged in the diplomatic tasks of profound impact on Ethiopian politics and economy in the 1950s. To situate his undertakings as a diplomat between the periods under discussion, it appears pertinent to begin the discussion with a brief account of especially the mutual interests of the governments of United States and Ethiopia.

Generally, "in the 1950s U.S. diplomacy focused on acquiring military access and communications facilities in Ethiopia, keeping communist influence out of the country, and

⁹⁸³ Emperor Haile Sellassei to President Joseph Broz Tito, 11th August, 1953, Folder Folder, 1/1-y, Yilma Déréssa's Personal File, MOFA

⁹⁸⁴ Some eleven Yugoslav experts and four interpreters were invited to participate actively in the consecutive Five-Year Plans. Ašānafī Šifāraw, 388, 389 and 402.

maintaining a government that reflected pro-Western positions in international and regional arenas.”⁹⁸⁵ The imminent influence of Soviets in some of the Third World countries seems to have forced USA to develop such a foreign policy. “Because a Communist victory anywhere appeared to be a threat to American stability everywhere, development became the second tactical weapon in Washington’s Cold War struggle.”⁹⁸⁶ In other words, “containment of the Soviet Union and its allies became America’s primary foreign policy after 1947.”⁹⁸⁷ On the other hand, “Ethiopia wanted American assistance in expanding and modernizing its military, help with modernization of the economy, and political support for the incorporation of Eritrea and control over the Ogaden.”⁹⁸⁸ More than anything else, however, “acquisition of Eritrea was a basic element in Ethiopia’s postwar foreign policy.”⁹⁸⁹ The Ethio-American relation, however, had never been steady throughout 1950s. Especially US interests in Ethiopia was influenced by international developments such as the Non-Aligned Movement, the Suez Canal crisis and the decolonization of the African states. These somewhat seem to have induced USA to reinforce its economic and military assistance to Ethiopia.⁹⁹⁰

Among Yīlma’s first accomplishments in the United States, as a principal delegate of the Ethiopian government to the United Nations, his active participation in the 8th general assembly was noteworthy.⁹⁹¹ In his speech to the assembly, Yīlma revealed Ethiopia’s stance on collective security, on the equality of human races and on the fate of peoples under colonial rule. Reflecting especially on the first point, Yīlma drew participants’ attention to the fact that there was a close

⁹⁸⁵ Theodore M. Vestal, “Relations with United States of America”, in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, eds. Alessandro Bausi and Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 4 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 1036b.

⁹⁸⁶ Mevety, 380.

⁹⁸⁷ Theodore M. Vestal, “Relations with...”, 1036b.

⁹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 1036b-1037a.

⁹⁸⁹ Marcus, *The Politics of...*, 79.

⁹⁹⁰ Mevety, 395-399.

⁹⁹¹ Yīlma Déréssa Prison Testament.

correlation between the economic condition of countries and collective security. He reminded the assembly Ethiopia's historical conviction to the collective security and her practical commitment to its cause in the Korean War. Throughout his address, Yīlma argued that poorer nations need to be provided economic and technical assistances.⁹⁹²

Handling issues related to the Korean War and U.S. military aid to Ethiopia based on the 1953 Mutual Military Assistance Agreement (MAAG) were also other major responsibilities of Yīlma in Washington.⁹⁹³ For instance, the delay in the arrival of military equipment which was accorded to Ethiopia in pursuance of the agreement and a new request for aid in establishing a merchant marine and naval training school and airplanes with a supply of spare parts (*aide-mémoire* of January 29, 1954) were high on the agenda in the diplomatic conversation between Yīlma and US authorities in May 1954. This *aide-mémoire*, probably prepared by Yīlma, stated that Ethiopia regarded the Red Sea coastline as a natural resource and also a responsibility. It requested help from the U.S. Navy, Merchant Marine, and Coast Guard in establishing a coast guard service and, eventually, a modest fleet of merchant vessels. It also requested help for Ethiopia's military air-training program. In response to Ethiopia's demand, Mr. Henry A. Byroade, Assistance Secretary of State, informed Yīlma that world-wide demands on the United

⁹⁹² *Addis Zāmān*: Ṭiqīmt 28, 1946 E.C..

⁹⁹³ This agreement was signed on 22 May 1953 and "it endorsed the use of Qañāw Station and other facilities in Eritrea by USA until 1978. Both also entered into a standard military assistance agreement regulating the delivery of weapons and other equipment and providing for a Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG). Washington agreed to train and equip three six-thousand-man divisions at a total cost of about five million dollars, a generosity then and subsequently considered a form of rent. Marcus remarked that some have characterized the treaties as 'an immoral accord' which placed Ethiopia under the effective control of American imperialism and of the Zionist world. Others have suggested that the Ethiopian case was merely one of a sense of U.S. responses to the decline of colonialism and of the power of Western Europe." Harold Marcus, *The Politics of...* 89-90.

States made it imperative that USA has given priority to those countries most vulnerable to communist aggression, and Ethiopia did not fall in this category.⁹⁹⁴

In association with Aklilu Habtä-Wäld, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, and other authorities as well as a legal adviser, Yīlma engaged in diplomatic endeavor to secure further US assistance for the expansion of health, education as well as the development of coffee programs; encouragement of private investment; the development of ports and a fishing industry. In the course of this conversation, among other things, Aklilu revealed to US authorities Ethiopia's desire to develop the ports of Massawa and Assab and the acquisition of coast guard vessels. He remarked that the Ethiopian budget could not support such projects at this time and if they are not undertaken Ethiopia is at the mercy of Djibouti (and by implication—the French government). In response to a question raised by Mr. Byroade regarding the reason for developing Massawa and Assab, Yīlma explained that this was to avoid conflict with Aden and Djibouti—a tug of war with other countries—such as Ethiopia had experienced in the past. Yīlma, in reply to a further question, indicated that Ethiopia feared that a request by them for a loan from the IBRD for the development of these ports would be blocked in the IBRD by the British and French.⁹⁹⁵

⁹⁹⁴ Other issues raised in the discussion include the terms of agreement that appeared to be vague to Yīlma with regard to MAAG. Hence he wondered whether the military aid agreement signed last year was limited to the first annual amount of 5 million dollars or whether his Government could expect supplementary aid in the fulfillment of Ethiopian military requirements. It was pointed out to him that neither amount nor period of time was stipulated in the agreement and the presence of MAAG in Ethiopia was an earnest of the United States continuing interest in the military needs of Ethiopia. It was suggested that the appropriate officials of the Imperial Ethiopian Government bring their views and requests to the Chief of the MAAG in Addis Ababa whose duty and responsibility it was to transmit requests and make recommendations to the Department of Defense. Memorandum of Conversation, by the Director, Office of African Affairs (Utter) Washington, May 4, 1954. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952–1954* Volume XI, Part I, Africa and S2.

⁹⁹⁵ Memorandum of Conversation, by the Officer in Charge, North African Affairs (Wellons) [Washington,] June 29, 1954, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952–1954*, Volume XI, Part I, Africa and South Asia (in two parts), Document 207.

Meanwhile, in response to the ever escalating Middle East and Third World politics at the time, Yilma, as a committed ambassador, seems to have notified his government at Addis Ababa in advance about the development. It is noted that “the UN served as a forum for following up developments in other parts of the continent. This way, Ethiopia managed to stay abreast of developments and contribute its share to intricate cases...as well as the entire decolonization process.”⁹⁹⁶ The experience of Yilma during his tenure in Ethiopian legation in the United States proves this insight. In a memo addressed to the Emperor, for example, he attempted to draw the attention of his government to the imminent implications of the agreement between Great Britain and Egypt regarding the Suez Canal, Ethiopia’s recognition of the State of Israel and the need for beginning a diplomatic relations with African countries the independence of which was a matter of time. Interestingly, an Egyptian ambassador asked Yilma about Ethiopia’s take on the State of Israel. Yilma seems to have responded that his government was still considering the issue and no official statement was made hitherto. This reply was indeed in full agreement with the policy of his government.⁹⁹⁷

Yilma appeared to have got himself bothered about the Suez Canal Base Agreement between the United Kingdom and Egypt in 1954.⁹⁹⁸ The memo he prepared was indeed in response to a

⁹⁹⁶ Belete Belachew, “Ethiopia in African Politics, 1956 -1991” (PhD Dissertation in History, Addis Ababa University, 2012),461.

⁹⁹⁷ The Ethiopian foreign ministry– led by Aklilu Habtäwäld, the Prime-Minister as of 1961 – convinced the Emperor to conceal the otherwise close relations, and appear in public as siding with the Arabs. In November 1947 Ethiopia abstained in the U.N. vote for the partition of Palestine, and a year later voted against the ad-mission of Israel to the U.N. In the 1960s, Ethiopia relied on Israel’s aid in practically all fields, but no Ethiopian embassy was opened in Israel, and Ethiopia joined the anti- Israel camp in the Organization of African Unity as well. The Israeli victory in the Six-Day War against Egypt, Jordan and Syria of June 1967 was celebrated in Ethiopia as salvation from the pan-Arab threat, but during the October 1973 war in the Middle East (between Israel, Egypt and Syria), Ethiopia broke its diplomatic relations with the Jewish state. Haggai Erlich “Relations with Israel” in *Encyclopedia Aethiopia*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 3 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 217a-b; Emperor Haila Silassei to Yilma Déréssa, 5th August, 1954, in Yämanä Īḡigu’s possession(New York).

⁹⁹⁸ Family Appeal to PMAC; Emperor Haila Silassei to Yilma Deressa, 5th August, 1954, in Yämanä Īḡigu’s possession(New York).

preliminary agreement (known as "Heads of Agreement") between the two parties on basic principles which was initiated on July 27, 1954, leaving details and technicalities to be worked out through further negotiations.⁹⁹⁹ The 1954 agreement, signed at Cairo on October 19, 1954, provides for the gradual evacuation of this garrison from the Suez Canal base, as these installations generally are known, by June 18, 1956. "During the twenty-month evacuation period (October 19, 1954- June 18, 1956) the Egyptian military forces will assume gradual control of the base, and custody of designated base installations."¹⁰⁰⁰ More than anything else, Nassir's remark that Egypt was uneasy about foreign influence as a result of the agreement, thus, he would focus on domestic economic issues, made Yilma anxious.

Reading a news report on this preliminary agreement by the New York Times (July 28, 1954) and talking to the new US ambassador to Egypt (Mr. Byroade), Yilma had given his reflections on the adverse implications of this accord for Ethiopia. He wrote that Egypt was denied economic and military assistance from USA because it declined to sign a treaty on the Suez Canal with United Kingdom. If Egypt had entered into the agreement, therefore, it would have got USA's assistance. Furthermore, Yilma kept on forewarning; this agreement would enable Egypt to join the defense alliance among Pakistan, Iran, Iraq and Turkey. Enjoying immense prestige at home and in the region, as a result, the Nassir regime would eventually shift the balance of power in the Middle East. Seeing the emerging Nassir regime in the region, closer at home, some Sudanese politicians those who aspired for unity with Egypt might get an upper hand in the country's parliament.¹⁰⁰¹

⁹⁹⁹ Charles B. Selak, "The Suez Canal Base Agreement of 1954," *The American Journal of International Law*, 49, No. 4 (October 1955):494.

¹⁰⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 487.

¹⁰⁰¹ Family Appeal to PMAC; Emperor Hailä Sillassé to Yilma Déréssa, 5th August, 1954, in Yämanä Īgīgu's possession (New York).

Therefore, Yilma recommended, it appeared pertinent to begin close alliance with the Sudan through, for instance, student exchange. He also suggested the immediate commencement of diplomatic relations with Liberia and the Gold Coast. Referring to Elections for the Legislative Assembly held in the Gold Coast in June 1954, for instance, Yilma reminded the Emperor that an envoy to Liberia may converse with the new prime minister of Gold coast. In Yilma's view, commencing diplomatic relations with such geographically far-off African countries was significant because international alliance mattered a lot to pursue a nation's interest. Though not powerful and independent these African nations had been at the time, Yilma provided justification, Ethiopia need not stand alone in this dynamic world. In order to meet that objective, he recommended the establishment of Africa and Middle Eastern Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹⁰⁰² All in all, Ethiopia's claim over Eritrea and Somalia, in conclusion, seems to have shaped somewhat its formative foreign policy in Africa.¹⁰⁰³

Representing Ethiopia in the Bandung Conference (April, 1955), Yilma was engaged also in the pursuit of his country's interest in the Non-Aligned Movement.¹⁰⁰⁴ The United Nation Organization, Yilma noted, had given considerable opportunity to form a cluster of Asian and African countries around the leaders of India, Yugoslavia, Sri Lanka, Burma and Indonesia in response to the bipolar international politics.¹⁰⁰⁵ Bandung "was the first step in institutionalizing

¹⁰⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰³ In addition to maintaining closer cooperation with respective colonial powers, there was an urgent desire on the part of Ethiopia to protect and advance its own national interests. See Belete Belachew, 461.

¹⁰⁰⁴ *Addis Zāmān*: Miazia 8, 1947 E.C.

¹⁰⁰⁵ The representatives of these countries "had dissatisfaction with what they regarded as a reluctance by the Western powers to consult with them on decisions affecting Asia; between the people's Republic of China and the United States; their desire to lay firmer foundations for China's peaceful relations with themselves and the West; their opposition to colonialism, especially French influence in North Africa; and Indonesian's desire to promote its case in the dispute with the Netherlands over western New Guinea". See, Giampaolo Calchi Novati, "The Non-Aligned Movement", in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 3 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 1195-1196; "Bandung", *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 1, 15th ed. (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., 2005), 863b-c; *Addis Zāmān*: Miazia 15, 1947 E.C..

the Non-Aligned Movement” and Yilma led the Ethiopian delegation that included such higher officials as Dawit Īquba Īgzi, Mika’el Īmīru, Īndalkačāw Mākonnīn and Kātāma Yīfru.¹⁰⁰⁶

Yilma was conscious and had firm stand about racial differences probably since his college days in the United Kingdom and appears to have believed in the need to strengthen, if not to initiate, Ethiopia’s relation with the African American people in the United States. In this regard, one of his accomplishments in Washington legation was to forge alliances with African American scholars from Howard University. On its national day, for the first time in the United States diplomatic history, the Ethiopian embassy (Yilma) had invited African Americans to the event together with United States government officials and Core diplomats without any racial discrimination. Prior to this, the Liberian embassy used to invite African American’s on the day after its national day to avoid racial mix with white authorities and other non-black diplomats. Yilma recalled in its prison testament that during Emperor Hailā Sīllassē’s visit in 1954, the embassy invited President Eisenhower and African American congressman and the president of Howard University and let them dine together. This somewhat helped the Ethiopian government to refute the accusation for its alleged dislike to blacks.¹⁰⁰⁷ In fact, his engagement with African American’s wasn’t confined to the diplomatic responsibility of this sort. For instance, Yilma, while he was Vice-Minister of Finance, was dispatched to the United States with specific government instructions to offer interested Afro-American teachers positions in Ethiopian schools. “In 1947, therefore, under his direction, a team of Afro-American educators arrived in Ethiopia and had been recruited in Ethiopia.”¹⁰⁰⁸

¹⁰⁰⁶ *Addis Zūmān*: Miazia 8, 1947 E.C.; Miazia 15, 1947 E.C.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Yilma Dērēssa Prison Testament.

¹⁰⁰⁸ For instance, “Dr. T. T. Fletcher, a graduate of Columbia University, accepted the appointment as Headmaster of the newly opened Mādhané-Alām Secondary School in Addis Ababa, and he brought with him an

Besides leading the Ethiopian delegation at the Conferences of United Nations(Yilma was elected vice-president of the assembly twice, first together with Ambassadors of China and Luxemburg), settling the boundary dispute between Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland was another public responsibility that Yilma had been dealing with as Ethiopian representative to the United Nations.¹⁰⁰⁹ Other than Yilma Déréssa, the diplomatic negotiations for border delimitation between Ethiopia and Somalia under the Italian Trust Administration had involved other Ethiopian higher officials and legal experts throughout the 1950s. Among these individuals, Haddis Alämayähu, John Spencer and Aklilu Habtä-Wäld had played significant role.¹⁰¹⁰

When Yilma was appointed as Ethiopia's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in the United States of America and the United Nations in 1953, the United Nations had long authorized the Trusteeship Council to draw up a preliminary draft on the boundary issues on 21st November, 1949 in its resolution number 289(IV). To this effect, an Interim Committee was formed and it developed a draft procedure for border delimitation. After a year, on 15th December 1950, the Committee had presented its draft procedure. Hence, the General Assembly of the UN passed Resolution 392(v) and it recommended delimiting the boundary through a procedure of bilateral negotiation between Ethiopia and Administering Trust Authority and, to resolve differences encountered during the negotiation, through mediation and arbitration.¹⁰¹¹

Afro-American teaching staff trained in the arts and sciences and vocational subjects." William Shack, "Ethiopia and Afro-Americans: Some Historical Notes, 1920-1970," *Phylon*, 35, No. 2 (2nd Qtr., 1974):150-151

¹⁰⁰⁹ Yilma Déréssa Prison Testament; *Addis Zämbän*: Mäskäräm 13, 1948 E.C..

¹⁰¹⁰ Aklilu Habtä-Wäld, *Aklilu Remembers...*; Spencer, 297-300; "*Sila Sumale Wäsän Guday*", IES,MS,3400.

¹⁰¹¹ "*Sila Sumale Wäsän Guday*", IES,MS,3400; Prison Testament; Family Appeal to PMAC; Haile Muluken, 260-261.

When no agreement was reached between Italy and Ethiopia, the Trusteeship Council reminded both parties of the urgency of delimitation on 6th July, 1954.¹⁰¹² Based on the deliberation of the 8th General Assembly, the representative of Haiti developed a resolution that called upon Italy and Ethiopia to submit issues pertinent to the boundary dispute to the advisory council. However, as Ethiopia's response to the Resolution on Somalia-Ethiopian boundary dispute by the Trusteeship Council in July 1954 delayed, Yilma clearly warned the Foreign Ministry at Addis Ababa to get prepared with regard to points Ethiopia should raise so that the forthcoming report by the Secretary-General would include Ethiopia's position.¹⁰¹³

Besides Italy's intense diplomatic pressure on Ethiopia, Yilma and other Ethiopian diplomats had faced other challenge in New York. For instance, Somali Politicians delegated by the Somali Youth League (SYL) notified the working group ("Committee 4") in charge of the boundary issue under the Trusteeship Council repeatedly in late 1955 that the Somali people didn't consider as valid international agreements concerning Somalia which were concluded before. Somalia was created as a Trust Territory on 21st November 1949. Agreements made between alien powers without the consent or consultations of the inhabitants were unacceptable to them.¹⁰¹⁴ In response to the statement of SYL delegates and other issues that would hurt Ethiopian national interests, therefore, Yilma Déréssa and other Ethiopian diplomats attempted to make Ethiopia's voice heard in the UN. Ethiopia was of the opinion that Somalia was legally created through UN Resolutions and SYL's refusal of the Resolutions meant the rejection of its statehood.¹⁰¹⁵

¹⁰¹² *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹³ Family Appeal to PMAC.

¹⁰¹⁴ "*Sila Sumalé Wäsän Guday*", IES,MS,3400

¹⁰¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Yilma Déréssa Prison Testament.

Meanwhile, in a conversation with Mr. George Allen on June 30, 1955 in Washington, Yilma said it was his Government's desire to negotiate a settlement of the disputed Ethiopia-Somalia boundary with Italy as quickly as possible. Boundary disputes, Yilma observed, are complicated affairs which couldnot be settled in a few weeks or a month such as that established in General Assembly Resolution 854(IX) of December 14, 1954. This resolution urged Ethiopia and Italy to negotiate directly a settlement of their dispute or resort to U.N. mediation as proposed in General Assembly Resolution 392(V) of December 15, 1950.¹⁰¹⁶ He also asserted on January 19 that U.S. vote was viewed as a vote against Ethiopia. At the urging of the United States, talks between Ethiopia and Italy began in June.¹⁰¹⁷ The initiative taken in June 1955 by the Ethiopian government brought an agreement that an Italo-Ethiopian commission should meet to negotiate on the delimitation of the boundary between the Ogaden and Somaliland.¹⁰¹⁸ Hence, the Italian delegates and Ethiopian authorities had begun a direct negation in Addis Ababa since 1956.

¹⁰¹⁶ A renowned legal advisor to the Ethiopian government vividly recalled that "on December 2, 1950, the General Assembly approved the Italian trusteeship agreement for Somaliland, with Ethiopia casting the lone negative vote. Article 79 of the Charter requiring her consent as a state "directly concerned" was ignored by the Assembly and the trusteeship was formally placed in operation. Two weeks later by Resolution 392 V recommended procedures on the delimiting the boundaries of the Trust Territory of Somaliland, through agreement between Ethiopia and the trusteeship administration of Somaliland. Resolution 392 V recommending bilateral negotiations on the undelimited portions of the boundaries contained a reference to mediation which I should not have allowed to slip in. It provided that, should the negotiations break down, a mediator was to be appointed by the secretary general of the United Nations at the request of either party. Should the parties be unable to accept the recommendations of the mediator, a procedure of arbitration was to be initiated at the request of either party. Such a procedure of mediatio could throw into question the basis for the delimitation of that portion of the boundary established by the 1908 boundary treaty which still remained to be delimited. With Third World and Soviet support, resolution 1213 XII was passed, stipulating direct recourse to arbitration, thereby affording a far greater measure of protection to Ethiopia's legal position. Despite that resolution, Italy was insisting, with the active support of the United States, that arbitration must be understood to be mediation, not a discussion of legal issues-precisely at it had in 1935." Spencer, 242.

¹⁰¹⁷ Conversation between Mr. George Allen and Yilma Déréssa, Washington, November 5, 1955. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957* Volume XVIII, Africa, Document 226.

¹⁰¹⁸ The commission was established following a delay of nine months due to various factors. First of all, until the federation with Eritrea had been implemented, Ethiopia was unwilling to re-open diplomatic relations with an Italy which had been her bitterest enemy in that question. Second, U.S. Ambassador Jessup had taken the position that the United Nations had jurisdiction over the boundary adjustments between Ethiopia and Somaliland. Ethiopia, unlike Italy and Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, asserted that no third party or state could dictate to any state what its boundary should be. Third, because of the legitimacy question, it was preferable to delay all boundary discussions until Somaliland had reached independence. In this regard, the available criterion for the negotiation appeared to be the provisions of the 1908 boundary convention and it was a juridical problem, to be solved by arbitration. Spencer, 294-295.

When the direct talks held in Ethiopia for two years were a fiasco, according to Resolution 1213(XII), the General Assembly opinion was that a final settlement could be achieved most expeditiously by a procedure of arbitration.¹⁰¹⁹ While the terms of reference or compromise was prepared by the arbitration body, it was recommended that there should be an 'independent person' to mediate the two parties. Hence, the General Assembly mandated the King Olaf of Norway to the task. The king in his turn nominated Trygve Lie the first secretary-general of the United Nations.¹⁰²⁰ Yilma recalled that the burning boundary question that he had been occupied with while he was in Washington and New York continued throughout his tenure in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1958-1960).¹⁰²¹

When Yilma came back home and assumed the ministerial position in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the arbitration to settle the Somalia-Ethiopia boundary dispute had already transferred from New York to Oslo.¹⁰²² With the recommendation of the General Assembly, an arbitral tribunal consisting of three jurists was established and Trygve Lie, was designated as an 'independent person'.¹⁰²³ Yilma claimed that he and his associates had attempted to change the attitude of Trygve Lie towards the allegedly uncompromised stance of Ethiopian authorities as he discussed the boundary matter with them in Addis Ababa.¹⁰²⁴ Trygve Lie received Ato Haddis Alameyehou, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, and John Spencer, and the Italian delegation consisting of Ambassador Piero Vinci and delegates Vitale Vitali Maurizio Battaglini, and the Somali representatives, Abdi Nur and Mohammed Ali Daar on August 3,

¹⁰¹⁹ However, as the Somalia-Ethiopia boundary question came before the 12th and 13th sessions of the UN General Assembly, Italy was pressed for mediation, closely supported by the UN Secretariat and by the United States. Yilma Déréssa Prison Testament.

¹⁰²⁰ "Sila Sumale Wāsān Guday", IES,MS,3400; Spencer, 297.

¹⁰²¹ Yilma Déréssa Prison Testament.

¹⁰²² Informants: Bīrhané Déréssa and Gétačāw Mākaša(Dr.).

¹⁰²³ Spencer, 297.

¹⁰²⁴ *Ibid.*, Yilma Déréssa Prison Testament.

and Asian countries, Yilma was not a type of statesman who would easily ignore the apparently far-off international developments. For instance, as to the foundation of the South East Asia Military pact in September, 1954 in Manila among U.S.A., Great Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Thailand and Philippines, he drew Aklilu's attention to the provision of membership in the treaty which called upon other Asian countries to join the pact.¹⁰²⁷

On December 18, 1957, Aklilu Häbtä-Wäld, in an official letter, summoned Yilma together with his family and his entire luggage from Washington to Ethiopia leaving the entire responsibility of the Ethiopian embassy at the Washington D.C. to a certain *Ato Kābādā Abābā*.¹⁰²⁸ Back home with his family, more than three months passed until Yilma had taken government responsibility officially. In early April 1958, he was promoted to the position of Minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹⁰²⁹ During his two years service in the ministry, among many other routine institutional duties, the Somalia-Ethiopia boundary dispute and the establishment of the Organization of African Union were his considerable undertakings. That said, however, Yilma achieved nothing individually. Rather, he and his associates in the ministry got together in a team effort to pursue the interests of Ethiopian government in regional and African politics.¹⁰³⁰

One of Yilma's primary tasks in the institution, sources give clues, was employing educated young personnel. Informants unanimously testify that Yilma had a habit to select and recruit potential technocrats. among the young university graduates¹⁰³¹ For instance, Yilma appointed a certain Getačāw Mākaša Director of Africa & Middle Eastern Department which was established

¹⁰²⁷ Yilma Déréssa to Aklilu Häbtä Wäld, September 9, 1954, File No. 170, File Name *Yä' Dāhub Misraq Īsiya Yāgara Mākālakāl Wīl*, MOFA.

¹⁰²⁸ Aklilu Häbtä Wäld to Yilma Déréssa, Dated December 28, 1957, Yilma Déréssa's Personal File, Folder, 1/1-y, MOFA.

¹⁰²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰³⁰ Informants: Habtä Silassé Tafāsā, Getačāw Mākaša and Bīrhanā Déréssa

¹⁰³¹ Yilma Déréssa Prison Testament; Informants: Getačāw Mākaša, Asfaw Damtē, Bulča Dāmāqsa, Tādla Tāšomā.

for the first time during Yīlma's tenure in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Gétačāw narrates how Yīlma designated him for that position:

[Yīlma] told me he came to know about me from my speeches at some international conferences which I attended as leader of the Ethiopian delegation. These conferences were: the first All African Peoples Conference held at Cairo, Egypt. The second All African Peoples Conference held at Accra, Ghana. Those speeches were given some coverage in the news papers like The Ethiopian Herald & Addis Zemen which he read while he was in Washington. He was particularly impressed by the strength & logic of my argument against the accusation of the Somali delegation in their feeble attempt to lump Ethiopia together with European Colonial Powers.¹⁰³²

Not only in his terms of office at Foreign Affairs, but also in the Ministry of Finance later in 1960s, Yīlma had strong trust on the young Ethiopian staffs, no matter how junior and inexperienced they would be. On top of this, faith in their professional competence and accomplishment, he strongly believes in the need to allow his subordinates greater freedom in their carrier and, so he did. Yīlma had always preferred bringing new blood into the ministries he headed including Foreign Affairs by selecting several persons from the younger generation to serve in important positions. He claimed that these younger staffs at the ministry turned out to be ambassadors and diplomats in a later period.¹⁰³³

Together with his later valuable services, Yīlma can be considered as one of the pioneers and architects of Ethiopia's Africa policy. As a result, freedom fighters from all over colonial Africa were received and welcomed in the capital Addis Ababa. Apart from moral encouragement, financial and other assistance was extended to them. Leaders of liberation movements were frequent visitors to Addis. The task of looking after them in Addis Ababa was African and Middle East Department. Among Yīlma's individual role, the preparation laying the foundation

¹⁰³² Informant: Gétačāw Mākaša(E-mail interview conducted in English).

¹⁰³³ *Ibid.*, Yīlma Déréssa Prison Testament.

of the Organization of African Unity stands out in the minds of colleagues.¹⁰³⁴ In this regard, for instance, he played a pivotal role in the second Conference of the Independent African States held in Addis Ababa in June 1960. As a leader of Ethiopia's delegates, he was elected president of the Conference. His diplomatic career at the United Nations Organization between the years 1953 and 1958 appeared to have contributed to his presidential designation in the Conference and Yīlma took on the special responsibility duly. The Second Conference held in the face of divergent views and it chose to delegate the issue to the President of the Conference, Yīlma, so that he would contact Heads of State to initiate consultation through diplomatic channels with a view to promoting African unity, and to consider the item at their next meeting in 1962.¹⁰³⁵ Though it was referred to as an official statement of the Imperial Government of Ethiopia, one may safely conclude that Yīlma's views reflected in the Conference can be taken partly as his personal political outlooks on African politics.¹⁰³⁶ Not to forget the Emperor's autocratic way of handling Ethiopian politics, given the frequent exchange of views and information between Yīlma and the Emperor about contemporary international developments during his tenure at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, however, one can argue that he would have influenced the views and decisions of the monarch on Ethiopian African politics.¹⁰³⁷

In an era when alliances have been formed throughout the world on continental bases, Yīlma explained in his public lecture he gave a week before the inauguration of the Conference in Addis Ababa, the need to establish an Organization of African Unity by African states would be

¹⁰³⁴ Informant: Gétačāw Mākaša(Dr.).

¹⁰³⁵ According to Belete, "the division of opinion came into the open when Ghana and Guinea proposed the endorsement of some form of African union at the Second Conference of Independent African States in Addis Ababa [June 1960]. The opposition rallied round Nigeria, which, according to some sources, woke up to challenge Nkrumah's and Touré's monopoly on African leadership." Belete Belachew, 281.

¹⁰³⁶ *Addis Zāmān*: Sāné 1, 1952 E.C.; Sāné 8, 1952E.C.; Sāné 9, 1952E.C.; Sāné 11, 1952E.C.; Sāné 15, 1952 E.C.; Sāné 18, 1952 E.C.

¹⁰³⁷ Informant: Häbtä Sīllassé Tafāse

an undue decision. The overriding objective of the Conference, he kept on arguing, was to continue the support provided for states which were under colonial rule. As to the condition of the African states in the international diplomatic forum, Yilma notified that they were under represented and this had an effect on their political and economic interests seriously. For instance, despite the participation of African soldiers in the Second World War, Africa's voice was not heard on matters which affected them. Apartheid, the decolonization of the whole continent, the need for inter-states cooperation and non interventionist principle were the major themes he emphasized in his presidential speech. Yilma urged African leaders to work together for the complete independence of African states.¹⁰³⁸

In his closing speech, Yilma opined that the accomplishments were the more remarkable in that the frequency and success of the earlier African meetings had the effect of consolidating further the forces of opposition. It was for this reason that, he kept on emphasizing, it became vitally important that the conference should mark a lasting advance in the establishment of an indistrptible unity among all African peoples. He also expressed his hope that participants had been able to forge in Addis Abaa a unity on the path of liberty and freedom for all people.¹⁰³⁹

As stated above, after establishing an African Department in the Foreign Ministry in the nation's history, he went about the business of widening the scope of Ethiopia's involvement in African Affairs. Together with Mäkönnin Häbtä-Wäld, Aklilu Häbtä-Wäld and Micha'el Īmīru, he was instrumental in pushing the call of Colonial Africa both in the U.N. and other world forum in the years between 1957 and 1960. As one of the early architects of Ethiopia's Africa policy, oral sources reveal, Yilma was credited with the idea of offering scholarships to African students

¹⁰³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰³⁹ Closing Speech by Yilma Deressa, "Conference of Independent African States (Second Session, Addis Ababa, 14-24 June 1960)" Memeographed, IES, Addis Ababa Universty.

from various parts of the continent. His recommendation for this scholarship as a major foreign policy instrument of Ethiopian government towards the upcoming African independent states went back to mid 1950s.¹⁰⁴⁰ He was also in the forefront of Ethiopia's struggle against apartheid South Africa and the cause of Namibia (South West Africa) in the U.N.¹⁰⁴¹ Yilma's short, yet remarkable service in diplomacy and foreign affairs came to an end on July 23, 1960 as he was re-appointed at the Ministry of Finance.¹⁰⁴²

To sum up, this chapter has attempted to mark out Yilma's accomplishments in two interrelated responsibilities. During his tenure at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry he dealt largely with issues related to foreign trade, aid and investment. As a diplomat and Minister of foreign affairs since 1953 too, his public life was preoccupied with international politics. Though he didn't engage in the establishment of modern institutions in these years like in the period between 1941 and 1949, he never took on public responsibilities in later period merely to oversee routine tasks. Reformist technocrat that he was, Yilma had also profound belief in the role of educated young personnel in meeting the objectives of institutions and had always brought new blood into the ministries he headed.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Family Appeal to PMAC; Emperor Hailä-Sillassei to Yilma Déréssa, 5th August, 1954.

¹⁰⁴¹ Like Mbiyu Koinange, Tom Mboya of Kenya, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Augustino Neto of Angola, Joshua Nkomo & Rev. Sithole of Zimbabwe A. Moumie of Cameroon; Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela of S. Africa; Sam Mujoma of Namibia. Informant: Gétačāw Mākaša(Dr.).

¹⁰⁴² Sälāmon Gäbrāmariam to Yilma Déréssa, Hamlé 6, 1962 E.C. Folder No, 1/1-y Personal File, MOFA.

Chapter Seven

Yilma Déréssa at the Apex of Power and His Gradual Retirement from State Politics (1960-1971)

Throughout the 1960s, sources testify, Yilma had become one of the few influential statesmen in the Ethiopian government. This was mainly because the Emperor began to devolve some of his powers to the bureaucrats. In this respect, devoting more attention to the international affairs and the general expansion of the government are said to have obliged the Emperor to permit more domestic policy-making to be undertaken by other bodies of the government. Posts that had become vacant because of the fifteen officials who were killed in the 1960 coup is said to have led to full *šum šir* (appointments and demotions) in the period under discussion.¹⁰⁴³ In such circumstances, overseeing the Ministry of Finance for successive nine years, Yilma exercised considerable power in the Ethiopian government. During the 1966 reorganization ('reform') of the Council of Ministers, some even expected him to be the Prime Minister.¹⁰⁴⁴ Even without holding the office of the premier, Yilma's power in the Ethiopian government reached its apogee in the 1960s as he had a great deal of influence with the Emperor because he was daily at the palace to discuss about every key issue related to finance and economy.¹⁰⁴⁵ This chapter attempts mainly to examine the public life of Yilma Déréssa in his second tenures both at the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism. Furthermore, it also tries to discuss his gradual retirement from government service in late 1960s and early 1970s.

¹⁰⁴³ Taffara, 186.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Christopher Clapham argued that "Yilma's ascendancy was much desired among the Oromo nationalist group." Clapham, 79. At that time, Bulcha Demeksa on his part claimed, "it was widely rumored that Yilma, who was an economist and better adept at Ethiopian politics, might be the Emperor's choice for the premiership. However, Yilma had two strikes against him. First of all, he was an Oromo. Secondly, he was brash and did not want to waste too much time with people he thought did not understand him." Bulcha, *My Life My...*, 82.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Informants: Bulcha Dämāqsa, Asfaw Damtē, Habtä-Sillassé Tafäsa and Tädla Täšomä; Clapham, 173.

7.1. Returning to the Ministry of Finance (1960-68)

When Yīlma came back to the very Ministry he and his subordinates literally established, he wouldn't have found it the same as he left it eleven years ago. The institution, especially under Mäkonñin Häbtä-Wäld (1949-1958), underwent marked changes in some ways. Though too short to leave a far-reaching institutional and personal legacy, Mahtämä Sīllassé Wäldä Mäqäl's term in the ministry (1958-1960) was also known for some fresh departures. In particular, the latter "demonstrated some determination in accepting measures to meet the Ethiopian balance of payments crisis of 1958-59 and helped to make the administration of finance slightly more efficient than it had been under Mekonen."¹⁰⁴⁶ In addition to this, Mahtämä Sīllassé "enabled ministers to get a better idea of how much money they were likely to be allotted. He also transformed the Budget by bringing of the year instead of, as hitherto, at the very end of it."¹⁰⁴⁷

Since 1949 Mäkonñin enhanced the power of the Ministry of Finance, according to Christopher Clapham(1969), specifically "by blocking and delaying the apparently arbitrary financial authorization through the imperial order."¹⁰⁴⁸ Needless to note here that in the budgetary history of Government, documents referred to as "budget" were published from 1944 to 1946, containing only expenditure list for which figures were collected from the hundreds of 'mazāžas'(orders) issued by the Ministry of Pen. The system of working on the basis of Palace 'mazāžas' was changed by Mäkonñin, though Government Departments continued to ignore it.¹⁰⁴⁹ That being the case, however, Mäkonñin's power rested on the support of the Emperor, to whom he was completely and unquestionably devoted and to whom he had access at any time.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Clapham, 162.

¹⁰⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴⁸ On entering the Ministry, for instance, Mäkonñin immediately cut all allowances for expenses other than salaries by half, so that ministers would have to petition either himself or the Emperor for their restoration. *Ibid.*, 159-161.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Bulcha, *My Life My...*, 61.

Bulcha recalls in his memoir that the Emperor an indirect form of decision-making is found in his use of *protégés* and personal informers. He would never openly block or refuse a request, but would appear to agree, and would then refer the petitioner to a *protégé* who would refuse it for him. The *protégés* were not delegated particular functions, and had no independent powers of decision. Generally, Mäkonin leaned heavily on traditional traits well-suited to his officials, and the difficulties of working a modern type of budget would have been considerable. Probably, due to lack of modern training in the field, his concept of finance was limited to keeping income as high and expenditure as low as possible, and whenever he could he would block or delay appropriations.¹⁰⁵⁰

Except for elevated position of the Ministry in the government, Yilma's long tenure in the ministry marked considerable difference. This might be generally due to structural, incidental and personal factors. Structurally, since 1957/58 there has been an excess of expenditure over revenue in the Ethiopian public finance. The existence of these deficits was a recent phenomenon and reflected a basic change in the budgetary policy of the Imperial Government of Ethiopia. During the tenure of Mäkonin, a conservative policy of maintaining cash surpluses to meet occasional budget deficits was maintained. But soon after the government adapted a policy of deficit financing, "the deficit being financed mainly by external aid and banking operations."¹⁰⁵¹ The year 1958 can be considered as the turning point in the development of the Ethiopian budget. This appears to be an important legal development with regard to Yilma's career in the Ministry of Finance throughout 1960s. Since 1958 the country's budget was enacted by Parliament and issued as a proclamation in the *Negarit Gazeta*, as required by the new Revised Constitution of 1955. The year marked "the beginning of the period of uninterrupted annual

¹⁰⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵¹ Assefa Beqeule and Eshetu Chole, 55.

enactment of a government budget.”¹⁰⁵² Subsequently, the Imperial Government “was obliged by the Fiscal Year Proclamation of 1959 to present its budget to Parliament several months before the start of the fiscal year.”¹⁰⁵³

The available sources unanimously explicate that more than any other historical factor, Yīlma as an individual was instrumental in changing the conditions of fiscal administration in Ethiopia since 1960. He wasted no time in laying some of the groundwork for gradual change in the Ministry of Finance. Unlike Schwab’s remark on Yīlma that “he had always been part of the high nobility who had held government posts since liberation from the Italians in 1941”¹⁰⁵⁴, as an educated functionary, Yīlma had never made personally his allegiance to the nobility despite his aristocratic social background from *Léqa Näqämté*. Schwab appeared to have made this unexamined representation of Yīlma probably because his analysis lacks historical aspect. Had Schwab studied Yīlma’s accomplishments in the Ministry of Finance and in the Ministry of Education since September 1941 and March 1945 respectively, he would get the chance to appreciate Yīlma’s effort and zeal for change and reform. That said, however, his actions especially since 1960 verify that he could discard traditional values and accept modern ones, when given the opportunity and convinced of the necessity. Indeed, “functional differentiation, and the changing complexion of those who filled political roles, had made the Ministry of Finance one of the more modern institutions in Ethiopia.”¹⁰⁵⁵

One can argue that Yīlma had some sort of plan to renovate the Ministry of Finance as one examines how he showed perhaps a greater willingness to employ as well as commitment to recruit and assign well educated and trained finance experts at different departments of the very

¹⁰⁵² Bulcha Demeksa, “The Ethiopian Budget”:370.

¹⁰⁵³ Clapham, 164.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Schwab, 121

¹⁰⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

Ministry he himself established and built up.¹⁰⁵⁶ Furthermore, “Yilma had been prepared to delegate to his subordinates; vice-ministers and assistance ministers of Finance, exercise a power far greater than that of most of their equivalents in other ministries, and wield considerable initiative.”¹⁰⁵⁷ Interestingly enough, Yilma immensely enjoyed the company of young people and had a strong belief that youth had a vital contribution to make to the progress of the country.¹⁰⁵⁸ Below is the brief discussion of these technocratic undertakings of my subject of study.

By and large, the process of recruitment revolved around the Emperor. This process required the monarch to play a personal role in the selection of middle-and high-rank official. Therefore, “recruitment became a highly centralized process personally supervised by the indefatigable Emperor who often took an interest in the selection and promotion of low-ranking officials as well.”¹⁰⁵⁹ Recruiting educated finance experts, of course with the benevolence of the emperor, was one of Yilma’s endearing habits since 1940s. When Yilma employed “staff (he had to recruit personally all university graduates in those days because there was no trained person to do it for him), he was careful.”¹⁰⁶⁰ He not only received applicants with proper merit and skill earnestly, he also requested for the transfer of personnel he thought important for the Ministry of Finance from governmental and non-governmental organizations. For instance, Yilma is said to have appealed to the emperor more than twice for the transfer of Asfaw Damtē, a graduate of Cambridge University, from Haile Silasse Prize Trustee to the Ministry of Finance. In Asfaw’s case, Yilma reminded the monarch that he gave him his promise that priority was given to Yilma

¹⁰⁵⁶ Informants: Asfaw Damtē, Bulča Demeksa; Tädla Täšomä; Gilks, 83.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Clapham, 174.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Informant: Gétačäw Mäkaša.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Markakis, 241.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Bulcha Demeksa, *My Life My...*, 70.

among other ministers in recruiting young educated personnel trained in finance and economics.¹⁰⁶¹

Tädla Täšomä's case was more or less similar to Asfaw's experience. Almost as a result of Yılma's personal pressure on him and Robert Gardner, the then Chief Executive Officer of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Tädla was transferred to the Ministry with a much less salary and remunerations. Yılma was of the opinion that Ethiopians working in international organizations with a better salary had to first serve their country before they pursued their personal economic interest. As Tädla complained about the financial trouble that he faced due to his transfer, Yılma advised him to pay attention only to his career and soon after assigned him as a board member at a government agency only to solve his financial problem.¹⁰⁶² Täfäri Lämman, an energetic Vice-Minister in the late 1960s was also transferred from the Finance Department of Telecommunications to the Ministry of Finance because Yılma wanted to work with him.¹⁰⁶³ Bulcha also recalls in his reminiscence:

While pondering about employment, I remembered seeing in Syracuse, U.S.A., a circular letter from the Ministry of Finance of Ethiopia which was distributed through the Educational Attache of Ethiopia in Washington D.C., inviting Ethiopian students abroad to apply for a job at the Ministry of Finance, specially if they had studied Economics or Finance or both....

One morning, I decided to go to the Ministry of Finance to enquire about the circular letter I had seen in Syracuse, and to explore about job possibilities. The Director of Personnel received me very politely and told me that the Minister of Finance (the famous Yılma Deressa) had a standing instruction that whenever a university graduate applied for a job at the Ministry, he wanted to personally

¹⁰⁶¹ Informant: Asfaw Damtē

¹⁰⁶² Informant: Tädla Täšomä

¹⁰⁶³ Informant: Bulcha Dämäqsa

*interview him/her. I was therefore taken to the Minister as he happened to be alone, I was taken in immediately.*¹⁰⁶⁴

Yilma appeared to have a list of young graduates as candidates for his institution. The list was usually formed through his own informal contact with prospective graduates or experts and the recommendation of his protégés. Yilma used to converse with junior civil servants or college students and he always asked them what they were studying in a college. He is said to have had disciplinary bias to Economics, Finance, and Political Science.¹⁰⁶⁵ It is important to note here that “beginning with the mid-1950s, graduates of the University College and returnees from abroad swelled the stream of educated, younger men who were recruited into the system.”¹⁰⁶⁶

As open-minded as he had been towards merit-based recruitment, he liked also to goad fresh employees in the Ministry with probing questions and cutting remarks. Having appreciated Asfaw’s educational background, for instance, Yilma once said to him “[however], you have to be re-educated in the ways of the bureaucracy!”¹⁰⁶⁷ Still, Yilma “loved the banter and the intellectual give and take of his conversation with young staffs.”¹⁰⁶⁸

Almost all studies in the area commonly state that, unlike other ministers in the Ethiopian government, Yilma attempted to modernize the Ministry of Finance especially in its human resource administration. In this regard, the Ministry of Finance was exceptional within the Ethiopian context mainly for the reason that “Yilma had permitted educated young staff to play a policy making role in his bureaucracy. Because he had also allowed them the use of administrative power these young, educated administrators were not nearly as administratively

¹⁰⁶⁴ Bulcha Demeksa, *My Life My...*, 53.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Informants: Täšomä Gäbrä-Mariam, Asfaw Damtē and Bīrhanä Dērēssa.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Markakis, 240.

¹⁰⁶⁷ The latter recalls till now that he temporarily developed a sense of resistance and murmured “you are not going to shape me in your own image”. Informant: Asfaw Damtē.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Informant: Gētačāw Mākaša.

frustrated as other educated Ethiopians who return from abroad to work in the various Ministries.”¹⁰⁶⁹ He even criticized other authorities who did not give chances for educated young staffs under them.¹⁰⁷⁰

Yīlma “didn’t concern himself much with day-to-day issues of public expenditure and delegates this to his subordinates, which was a great change from the time of Mäkonin Häbtä Wäld.”¹⁰⁷¹ Once Yīlma gave responsibility to his associates and juniors, “he never went into the details and nagged a delegated expert. He gave full responsibility appertaining to that office.”¹⁰⁷² Focusing only on important matters, experts and authorities under him would enjoy full power over their profession sometimes even to the disappointments of status-conscious dignitaries and higher officials especially in the Council of Ministers. For example, once Yīlma was said to be blamed for delegating an expert whose official rank was much inferior to others in a meeting attended by as high ranking authorities as Prince Asratā Kassa. Yīlma defended in front of the emperor that he sent a professional who was knowledgeable about the issue at hand and that delegate, though only a director of a department, carried out his assignment.¹⁰⁷³

As far as the practice of delegation of authority is concerned, Yīlma was a noninterventionist minister, if not a laissez-faire manager, and in this regard he marked moderate departure from the conventional approach to authority. Here, Clapham’s statement is expressive:

The leader himself loses status if he shares his authority with an inferior, and this, with the inferior’s reluctance to seem presumptuous, contributes to that failure to delegate which has been one of the most marked features of Ethiopian administration. Authority cannot be effectively delegated because it is personal to

¹⁰⁶⁹ Schwab, 118.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Informant: Asfaw Damtē.

¹⁰⁷¹ Clapham, 167.

¹⁰⁷² Bulcha Demeksa, *My Life My...*, 70.

¹⁰⁷³ Informant: Asfaw Damtē.

*the individual, and any political position, likewise, is essentially a personal position rather than an impersonal office. This has been a constant barrier to the development of institutional government....*¹⁰⁷⁴

What was more important in Yīlma's leadership style was that he by no means imposed his views and positions over his delegates to be reflected in a Council of Ministers or in any inter-ministerial meetings. By doing so, he gave experts an opportunity to mark out their duties and responsibilities by their own and get prepared to deal with issues pertinent to the Ministry of Finance. He had also a strong conviction on expert testimony.¹⁰⁷⁵ For Yīlma, any task was unthinkable without preliminary research and some empirical data. He, for instance, informed the Council of Ministers that he couldn't present a tentative tax rate on luxury goods for no research had been conducted so far.¹⁰⁷⁶ Hence, "he always expected well researched work. It was always difficult to satisfy Yīlma with a mediocre piece of work."¹⁰⁷⁷ He loved to bombard his assistances with questions and detested doubtful answers and unverifiable statements. Yet, he was ready to show the ways of things in the bureaucracy and parliament to new appointed experts. This could be formally at office or informally at dinner table in his home.¹⁰⁷⁸

It is a common remark about Yīlma that he knew how the whole government system was structured and hanged together. Taddässa Yaqob is said to have remarked retrospectively that Yīlma, unlike him and Mīnasé Lämmä, was more comfortable while dealing with issues of structural nature than routine office activities.¹⁰⁷⁹ Hence, in the meetings of the Council of Ministers, he outshone everyone around the table including the Prime Minister on general and

¹⁰⁷⁴ Clapham, 6.

¹⁰⁷⁵ For instance, before the Ethiopian government decided to purchase a Soviet made fighter Helicopter in mid 1960s, Yīlma had invited experts to give their professional testimony. Informant: Šimīrāt Mādhāné(Col.)

¹⁰⁷⁶ Yīlma Déréssa to the Council of Ministers, *Tir* 21, 1938 E.C. Folder No. 6071-6107, ŠM, MOFED.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Bulcha Demeksa, *My Life My...*, 70.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Informants: Tādla Tāšomä, Asfaw Damté, Bulča Dāmāqsa.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Informant: Bätaru Admasé.

specific government affairs. In the extremely formal meetings of the Council of Ministers in the grand palace, Yīlma never rushed into queries, answers and debates. As per the request of the chairperson, however, he used to give informed explanations on everything sometimes to the embarrassment of ministers about whose institutions and departments Yīlma was commenting on.¹⁰⁸⁰ He was always an informed minister and lecturing at the people. Not to forget his study in the London School of Economics and Political Science, his personal collection of books and issues he was enjoying dealing with shed light on how an intellectual minister he had been.¹⁰⁸¹ For example, he read literature about the sales of various defense equipment and the organizations of the army. He “subscribed to magazines on the restrictions and availability of defense equipment, including aircraft. In the Council of Ministers, he spoke of the range of fighter planes and compared the efficiency of F5’s to MIG21’s.”¹⁰⁸²

All in all, as Peter Schwab remarked, because Yīlma permitted his young advisors to play a large role in policy making in the Ministry of Finance, it was not at all surprising that these younger men with educational backgrounds that tended to make them more modern and forward looking. Yīlma Déréssa, therefore, “deserved much of the credit for making the Ministry of Finance [in 1960s] one of the most potent forces representing modernization in Ethiopia.”¹⁰⁸³ Behind Yīlma’s power, no doubt, was no more vital factor than his intimate relationship with Emperor Hailä Sillassé and his loyalty to the monarch.

Like in any other cases, “the relationship with the Emperor was the determining factor, and like any major politicians, Yīlma had a great deal of influence with him and was daily at the

¹⁰⁸⁰ Informants: Asfaw Damté and Bulcha Dāmāqsa

¹⁰⁸¹ Personal Book Collections of Yīlma Déréssa in Sofia Yīlma’s Possession.

¹⁰⁸² Bulcha Demeksa, *My Life My...*, 71.

¹⁰⁸³ Schwab, 118.

palace.”¹⁰⁸⁴ Yilma Déréssa was “a highly important Minister, not just because of his own status, or because of his significance as the leading Oromo in the Council of Ministers for many years; he also had the Emperor’s ear in financial matters. To gain funds it was necessary to convince either the Emperor or Yilma.”¹⁰⁸⁵

Yilma was also unique in the way he greeted the Emperor. “While other ministers bowed very low to the Emperor, he only bowed his head slightly with his usual diary on his chest.”¹⁰⁸⁶ When the two discussed public issues, they made it at most relaxation and simplicity.¹⁰⁸⁷ The Emperor is said to be concerned about Yilma that he cared about Yilma’s momentary mood before he brought government business to Yilma’s attention.¹⁰⁸⁸ As a Minister of Finance who was well-versed with modern economics, Yilma’s advice and view were needed badly by the emperor before the latter took a decision.

At any time the emperor wanted to talk to Yilma, he used to give a call and there were several occasions the monarch conversed with him through telephone even at evenings. Yilma usually responded to the emperor’s call from his private office at home.¹⁰⁸⁹ Throughout 1960s, in the Council of Ministers, it was only Aklilu Habtä-Wäld, the Prime Minister, who was probably more influential in matters of Ethiopian government than Yilma. Clapham even compared Yilma’s power in the 1960s to the famous *Ṣāḥafē Tī’az* in the pre-1955 years and stated that “the ability to influence the Emperor’s choice of appointment served as a measure of a politician’s importance, and it was an essential element in the power of a Welde Giorgis or of 1960s major minister like Yilma Deressa that his support or disapproval may make all the

¹⁰⁸⁴ Clapham, 167.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Gilks, 83.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Bulcha Demeksa, *My Life My...*, 70.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Informant: Bäqälä İndäšaw

¹⁰⁸⁸ Informant: Mulugéta Etäfa(Dr).

¹⁰⁸⁹ Informant: Sofīa Yilma

difference to one's chances of promotion and disgrace.”¹⁰⁹⁰ Key informants recall that whenever development plan or a project of economic nature was presented to the emperor during the *aqabé sā'at(guday maqräbiya)* in the form of proposal, he posed a question: “did Yilma know about this?”.¹⁰⁹¹ Most often the authorization of money involved recurrent negotiations among the Emperor, a claimant authority and Yilma Deressa. With regard to this, the chart that Christopher Clapham (1969) employed to illustrate the decision making process in public finance indicates only the one way flow of authorization of money and simplifies the process of bargaining among the Emperor, Yilma Déréssa and other authorities over public expenditure through the age-long customary institutions of *aqabé sā'at(guday maqräbya)* and *däğ ħinat*.¹⁰⁹²

Oral informats unanimously stress the close relationship between the Emperor and Yilma Deressa. Here goes a couplet by the local singer at Gimbi, for instance, about the relationship between the Emperor and Yilma in February 1963 when the monarch made an official visit to Wälläga with him:

Afaan Oromo

English translation

“*Simbiro takiti Bari'rati Egu*

“*At the gate, they look after a single bird*

*Läğ Yilma Déréssaḥi Hailä-Sillassé
Garaa wali beku”*

*Läğ Yilma Déréssa and Hailä-Sillassé
understand each other very well”*¹⁰⁹³

This couplet does not only explain that Yilma and Emperor Hailä-Sillassé were very close and understood each other but the Emperor as the sole leader of the country trusted him unreservedly.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Clapham, 95.

¹⁰⁹¹ Informants: Habtä-Sillassé Tafäsä, Bulcha Dämäqsa, Mängäsha Siyum and Asfaw Damtē.

¹⁰⁹² Clapham, 171.

¹⁰⁹³ Informant: Täsgära Tučo.

Therefore, in the years between 1960 and 1969, it is difficult to find any economic issue that Yilma didn't observe, if not initiated and made a final decision. Moreover, as he had been a board member and most often a chairperson in several agencies and enterprises, he was occupied with wide range of state affairs, too. The following list shed light on the responsibilities he bore in this regard: Haila Sillasse I University, The Haile Sellassie I Prize Trust, The Education Board, The Ethiopian Airlines, the State Bank of Ethiopia, Agricultural Bank of Ethiopia, Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, Ethiopian Telecommunication, The Ethiopian Currency Board, Ethiopian Grain Board, Ethiopian Hotel Share Co(The *Ras* Hotel), National Resource Development, Wängi and Mätähara Sugar and Tändaho Plantation, National Commissioner of the Boy Scout Association.¹⁰⁹⁴

¹⁰⁹⁴ List of Boards in which Yilma Déréssa was a member and Chairperson, Family Collection; Berhanu Abebe, "The Haile Sellassie I Prize Trust," *Northeast African Studies*, New Series, 2, No. 3 (1995): 35; Talbot, 336-337; List of Boards in which Yilma Déréssa was a member and Chairperson, Family Collection.



Figure 7. Emperor Hailä-Selassie I and Yilma Déréssa, 1971, Addis Ababa. Exhibition organized by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in Addis Ababa.¹⁰⁹⁵

As mentioned earlier, Yilma decentralized power (what Schwab called ‘functional differentiation’) in the Ministry and let his associates to take freely on their duty. In public expenditure, for instance, he used to give full responsibility to a budget preparation vice-minister to develop a preliminary budget meant to be presented to the Council of Ministers. Being general trends in Ethiopian economy his major concern, hence, Yilma only passed minor comments to works done professionally. Sometime, in late 1960s, for instance, Yilma advised a junior finance

¹⁰⁹⁵ In Sofya Yilma’s Possession.

expert to polish the language of his report so that it wouldn't be offensive.¹⁰⁹⁶ With regard to this, "Yilma had been especially interested in the Capital Budget, and though he had made recommendations here and there on the administrative part of the Budget, he had usually been ready to accept the views of the Committee."¹⁰⁹⁷

Documents and oral sources unanimously reveal that Yilma was full of activity throughout the 1960s. For instance, when Yilma led the preliminary Ethiopian delegation to the USA before the October 1963 visit of Emperor Haile Sillasse,¹⁰⁹⁸ engineer Asäfa Mängäša came up with a plan to build a dam, with the assistance of US government, over the Finçi'a River for various development projects. However, Yilma was too busy to scrutinize the details of the project. Assuming that the engineer was proposing for a dam to be constructed on tributary of the Blue Nile River, a project too sensitive and too expensive to carry out, Yilma rejected the bid. Hence, the engineer had to convince Bulcha Demeksa, Yilma's protégé and a vice-minister; so that Yilma would reconsider the snap judgment he took on the plan. Soon after, engineer Asäfa was instructed to rewrite the proposal with a wider scope and submitted it to Yilma.¹⁰⁹⁹ Eventually, the project became successful as Ethiopia could get a financial aid from U.S. government about Eth \$ 54, 250,000.¹¹⁰⁰

Habtä Sillassé Tafässa also recalls to date that Yilma was intolerant to his metaphoric expressions on the importance of Ethiopia's natural beauty in the tourism economy. Habtä Sillassé, while he submitted a budget request to the emperor to establish an organization that

¹⁰⁹⁶ Informant: Tädla Täšomä

¹⁰⁹⁷ Clapham, 165-166.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Theodore M. Vestal, "The Lion of Judah at Camelot: U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Ethiopia as Reflected in the Second State Visit of Emperor Haile Selassie to the United States" *International Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 4, No. 1/2 (Spring/Fall 2009):150.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Informant: Asäfa Mängäša.

¹¹⁰⁰ Minutes of the Budget Committee of the Parliament of Imperial Government, Ginbot 17, 1959, IES, MS, 338.

would run tourism in Ethiopia, said to Yilma and the Emperor that even the country's fresh air could be sold. “ምን ይቀጥሻራል?”-“What a non-sense matter is he talking about?” was Yilma's response.¹¹⁰¹

In the period under discussion, regular meetings and formal discussions with Ethiopians and with the delegates of international organizations were Yilma's major preoccupations. He participated and, at times, led the Ethiopian delegation in a number of bilateral talks with the officials of the World Bank to secure loan and aid mostly for capital expenditure.¹¹⁰² He, for instance, was “the chairperson of the twentieth annual meeting of the Board of Governors of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) that took place in Washington, September 27-October 1, 1965.”¹¹⁰³ At home, Yilma also attended intermittently meetings of Board and Committee to which he served as a member and most often as a chairperson. However, he didn't engage in all collective responsibilities always. Sometimes he prioritized other public duties and declined to attend a Board or Committee meeting. Being a frequent absentee from the meeting of Education Board, for instance, Yilma had received a letter in November, 1962 written by the chairperson of the Board, which urged his attendance at the forthcoming meeting of immense importance despite his engagement in other demanding responsibilities.¹¹⁰⁴

During these years, Yilma took initiatives personally to the establishment and implementation of institutions, proclamations and economic plans. For instance, in an attempt to respond to the challenge of excess expenditure over revenue, Yilma attempted to increase the revenue sources

¹¹⁰¹ Informant: Habtä Sillassé Tafässa

¹¹⁰² “Office Memoranda” by J.M. Jenten, September 28, 1964, Records Center Room HB-1, 1969-71 Box No. 292-02, World Bank Archives(Shared by Surafel Gelgelo, Department of History, Addis Ababa University):*Addis Zāmān*:Yäkatit 2, 1953 E.C.

¹¹⁰³ “International Bank for Reconstruction and Development” *International Organization*, 22, No. 4 (Autumn, 1968): 1002.

¹¹⁰⁴ *Bīlatēn gēta* Zäwdē Bälaynäh to Yilma Déréssa, 7th November, 1962, Personal File of Yilma Déréssa, HIO, MOFED

of the state and expand the tax base of Ethiopian government throughout his tenure. Yälma personally initiated and supervised closely the foundation of Sodäre hot spring since 1961/62. Though administered by the Ministry of Government Property, Yälma, dedicating his leisure time too, played a leading role in the realization of the firm. At the time of its inauguration in 1962, the hot spring could give service for about 3,000 customers monthly.¹¹⁰⁵

Studies on the Ethiopian finance reveal that he played an important role in the introduction and implementation of 1967 Agricultural Income Tax Law. Agricultural incomes weren't subject to tax prior to this law. This raised a dilemma in that while agriculture was (and is) the mainstay of the economy, "the absence of taxes on agricultural income meant that the most preponderant revenue. As to why such taxes were not levied before, one could speculate that there was a formidable technical problem of collecting taxes from a non-monetized sector."¹¹⁰⁶

The Agricultural Income Tax of 1967 (Schedule D of Proclamation No. 255) "was initiated when Yälma suggested to his official advisors at a meeting held in his office at the Ministry of Finance the need for a tax on produce. Administrative and technical problems notwithstanding, it was a proposal worthy of attempt. One merit of the Agricultural Income Tax is its yield-elastic character."¹¹⁰⁷ Chaired by Yälma, "the meeting was attended by Bulcha Demeksa and Täfäri Lämna, the two Vice Ministers. During the following months meetings were held, often without

¹¹⁰⁵ Zäwdinäh Qīṭaw to *fitawrari* Hailä-Mika'el Zäwdé, March 24, 1963, Folder No.321, File No 1636, Wäldä Mäsqäl Tariku Memorial Archive, IES,AAU; *Addis Zämān*: Mäskäräm 9, 1956 E.C.; Informant: Bīrhanä Déréssa

¹¹⁰⁶ Eshetu Chole, "Taxation in Ethiopia: An Analysis of Structure, Policy and Performance," (MA Thesis, University of Illinois, 1968), 61. Schwab, 122.

¹¹⁰⁷ Assafa Beqeulea and Eshetu Chole, 60.

the presence of Yīlma. However, both Yīlma would have found the approval and the implementation of the law difficult.”¹¹⁰⁸ Schwab explained:

*Through the eight months of discussion Parliament vetoed, extended, and altered various sections of the bill. Though many members of the Chamber of Deputies are landowners affected by the bill (which became law in November 1967) their negative reaction was not only due to a particular self-interest, but also to the fact that they felt they were indeed representatives and would be held responsible for their actions in the upcoming June 1969 elections.*¹¹⁰⁹

Yīlma did not engage himself with this long process of law making. As usual, he selected Ešātu Habtä-Giorgis, Director of the Legal Department in the Ministry of Finance, who had directed and co-ordinated the groups framing the bill, to be the lobbyist of the Ministry of Finance in the Chamber of Deputies.¹¹¹⁰ No matter how Yīlma delegated his subordinates to important tasks and responsibilities and decentralized the decision making process in the institution, he was not a mere supervisor in the Ministry of Finance. He, for instance, occupied with the preparation of the second five-year (1963-67) and handling issues related to foreign aid and loan.

When the First Five-Year Plan (1957/8-1962) was launched in the 1957, apparently, Yīlma was engaged in foreign relations and he made no personal contribution to it. Being the Minister of Finance since 1960, however, he participated in the preparation and implementation of the Second Five-Years Plan (1963-67). As the Planning Board Office was a key institution for the development of the plan, the role of the Ministry of Finance in it could not be as such central. Unlike the First Five-Years Plan, however, almost all top Ethiopian government officials took part in the Plan grouped into three levels of committee. The first one was chaired by the emperor and consisted of 19 members including the Crown Prince, all Ministers and the Governor of the

¹¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹⁰ Schwab, iii, 122, 124, 125.

State Bank of Ethiopia. Chaired by the Prime Minister, the second Committees was similar to the Council of Ministers. In the third grouping, there were five permanent committees, namely, the investment committee, the credit and finance committee (the Minister of Finance or his delegate being its chairperson), the land development and resettlement committee, the foreign trade committee and the National Community Development committee.¹¹¹¹

Written sources from the Ministry of Finance reveal that, before the launching of the Second Five-Years Plan in 1963, Yilma participated in the meetings organized by the Office of the Planning Board from April 1962 to December 1962.¹¹¹² Though he seemed quite reserved in the meetings, Yilma was always insightful and farsighted in his suggestions and plans. Seen retrospectively, an informant tells, for instance, a plan by Yilma to establish the grand granary in Addis Ababa when the population of the city was reasonably small appeared to be an ill-timed undertaking and Yilma was criticized. However, given the growing trend of population growth, the project could be considered now an appropriate accomplishment.¹¹¹³ A look at the minutes of the meeting on the Second Five-Years Plan chaired by the Prime Minister in late June 1965 also testifies that he used to do thorough preparation for a meeting.

Yilma, as a Minister of Finance and as a chairperson of an *ad hoc* committee in charge of issues related to economic aid and loan during the emperor's second visit to United States of America in 1963, presented the information about the Eth \$100 million aid and loan from U.S. to the planning board committee members chaired by the Prime Minister. He listed some projects proposed by various governmental organizations and to be implemented at different parts of the

¹¹¹¹ Prime Minister Office to Lieutenant General Abiy Abäbä, September 29, 1961, Folder No. A3271-3321, ŠM, MOFED.

¹¹¹² Wäru Habtä-Wäld to Yilma Déréssa, April 11, 1962, Personal File of Yilma Déréssa, MOFED; Wäru Habtä-Wäld to Yilma Déréssa, Dated December 14, 1962, Folder No. A3271-3321, ŠM, MOFED; Tadäsa Yacob to Yilma Déréssa, May 12, 1962, Folder No. A3271-3321, ŠM, MOFED.

¹¹¹³ Informant: Ašānafī Šifāraw

country. The list of projects Yilma explained to the Committee was as follows: agro-industrial plant, glass and bottle factories, cotton processing factory in Bahr Dar, oil seeds farm in Arba Mīnç, Mechanized farm in Adami Tulu and Grand Granary in Addis Ababa(10 containers each with a storing capacity of 2,000 tons). Almost all the projects to which the money was allocated were included in the Second Five-Years Plan. Interestingly, a committee member raised the issue of the role of state in an economy as he found it inappropriate the ownership of these projects by Ethiopian government. Abäbä Rāta criticized the excessive role of the government in the economy arguing that the responsibility of the state was to provide social and economic services and building infrastructures. These projects, he kept on arguing, could be run by private investors. Yilma was only apologetic in his response to Abäbä. Not to miss the chance this aid and loan offered to the Ethiopian government, he said to Abäbä, the government first would own the projects and eventually transfer them to private investors.¹¹¹⁴

That said, however, loans and aid grants could not be got easily. Handling the financial, economic and other technical assistances from the World Bank (especially IBRD) and IMF was the major responsibility of Yilma and his associates in the period under discussion. Almost all loans from, for instance, the World Bank, were conditional and projects were put into practice most often after finance that could cover part of the expense were raised from domestic sources.¹¹¹⁵ Until 1965, Yilma estimated, Ethiopia could get nearly Eth \$160 million from the World Bank and invested it in the infrastructure development and service expansion.¹¹¹⁶ Yilma and his associates had been active participants of the annual conferences and other meetings of the World Bank held in various cities of the world and he was the chairperson of the 1965

¹¹¹⁴ Minutes of Planning Board Committee, June 28, 1965, Folder No.A3271-3321, ŠM, MOFED.

¹¹¹⁵ Informant: Asfaw Damtē

¹¹¹⁶ *Addis Zāmān*: Tīqīmt 13, 1957 E.C..

summit. He had also a close relationship with higher officials of the Bank such as George D. Woods.¹¹¹⁷

As the amount and diversity of international aid to the country increased in 1960s (U.S.A, World Bank, International Development Agency, Yugoslavia and Soviet Union), Yilma established the Department of International Aid, a separate section in the Ministry of Finance the major objective of which was managing aid and loans. He also became instrumental in opening a branch office of the Ministry of Finance attached to Ethiopian Legation at Washington D.C. The office was administered by *Ato* Asfaw Damtê, an economic expert with the rank of Assistant Minister.¹¹¹⁸

Yilma always tried not only to secure loans and aid from donors but also to keep his country's promise to settle the debt on time and win the confidence of benefactors. In this respect, Yilma had received a letter of appreciation from the Director of the African Department of the World Bank for good performance of the Ethiopian Government in the mutual project of the Imperial Highway Authority.¹¹¹⁹ It is important to point out here that authorities of the World Bank hadn't placed trust in third world countries and resisted providing any financial aid to them. Whenever aid was unavoidable, they made it conditional. For instance, until January 1961, the management of the Ethiopian Telecommunications Board was occupied by expatriates. Having placed trust in Ethiopian administrators and the good performance in handling credits and debts, in May 1962, the World Bank granted the Ethiopian government Eth \$ 7.25 Million for expansion of telecommunications planned to be carried within consecutive three years. The then

¹¹¹⁷ A.G. EL Emary to Yilma Dêréssa, January 1968, Records Center Room HB-1, 1969-71 Box No. 386-07, World Bank Archives; Informant: Bulcha Dāmāqsa.

¹¹¹⁸ Yilma Dêréssa Prison Testament; Informant: Asfaw Damtê.

¹¹¹⁹ A.G. EL Emary to Yilma Dêréssa, January 1968, Records Center Room HB-1, 1969-71 Box No. 386-07, World Bank Archives.

Telecommunications Board, on its part, was expected to contribute about Eth \$7.75 million to cover the total cost. This loan, hence, became one of the success stories as far as the country's relation with the World Bank is concerned.¹¹²⁰ Additional Eth \$12 million loan payable in the coming 20 years was also granted to the Telecommunications Board some three years later.¹¹²¹ The issue of national debt was also a concern of lower house of the Ethiopian parliament and authorities from the Ministry of Finance namely, *Ato* Asfaw Damtê and *Ato* Bulča Dāmāqsa, had given members a formal briefing.¹¹²² It seems probable that the then president of the World Bank, George David Woodson, confirmed that Ethiopia was of one the good performers in terms of handling its debt from the World Bank.¹¹²³

If power decentralization and giving a proper chance for the young professionals in the bureaucracy were aspects of Yīlma's success story in the Ministry of Finance, lack of transparency and spontaneous deficit financing could be considered as the weaknesses for which he was criticized seldom in 1960s.¹¹²⁴ Seen from the general context, transparency in the Ethiopian government bureaucracy appeared to be more of exceptional than the rule. From documents in the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, one can witness the tendency of authorities of Ethiopian bureaucracy to categorize easily quite a lot of written information into 'secret', 'top secret' and 'urgent top secret'. Almost half a century ago, scholars pointed out the very challenge they were facing in the Ministry of Finance related to access to information even for academic purposes.¹¹²⁵ The report of the Auditor General (*Ato* Zānābā

¹¹²⁰ Informant: Bātru Admassé; *Addis Zāmān*: Ginbot, 27, 1954 E.C..

¹¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹²² *Addis Zāmān*: Tīqīm 23, 1958 E.C.

¹¹²³ *Addis Zāmān*: Nāhasé 29, 1958. E.C.

¹¹²⁴ Informant: Māngāša Sīyum(*Lī'ul Ras*)

¹¹²⁵ Ethiopian scholars on the field in 1967 complained that "nothing was more frustrating to the student of Ethiopian Affairs than the acute dearth of material necessary for detailed research and inquiry. The problems were

Haile) on the 1962/63(1955 E.C.) budget inspection shows that Yilma didn't handle the issue related to auditing with ease. The following translated excerpt of the report tells more:

*When we attempted to inspect the account of total revenue and expenditure of the Ethiopian Government for the fiscal year 1955 E.C. prepared by the Ministry of Finance, we found it very difficult to get many financial documents from the Ministry. For this reason, we put forward written questions to his Excellency the Minister of Finance. However, no answer was offered at all. We would like to notify that the account by the Ministry wasn't substantiated with the relevant documents and evidences whatsoever. Therefore, the annual account wasn't checked against the actual financial situation.*¹¹²⁶

Yilma declined to give a written response probably because he didn't want personally to disclose the real practices of expenditure in the Ministry for political reasons. For the consecutive two years too, no progress was seen from Yilma as far as the request of the Auditor General was concerned.¹¹²⁷ Besides, he is said to have rarely put his signature in written documents in the hope that he would not be accountable some day in the future. Yet, as he strongly believed in delegation, he most often notified the young authorities to give their individual decision.¹¹²⁸ Yilma was also always impatient, according to Spencer, with the latter's insistence on, for instance, "in the discussion fighting with the TWA negotiator over the precise wording of the basic contract establishing the Ethiopian Air Lines, the legal details and factual backing of every proposal, preferring, for his part to take what he conceived to be broad (and at times sweeping) approaches to questions and formulas."¹¹²⁹

created partly by uncooperative and unsympathetic government officials who were quick to label even the most non-controversial document 'top secret' and 'confidential'". Assefa Begele and Eshetu Chole, i.

¹¹²⁶ "Sila 1955 A.M. Bäqārābāw Yānīgusā nāgāstu māngīst amātawī Yā'gābīna Yā'wācī hisab rapor lay Yā'wanaw oditār astāyayāt", Haddis Alāmayāhu File, IES, MS, 3401-34-3402.

¹¹²⁷ Zānābā Hailé to Yilma Déréssa, Maizia 6, 1958 E.C., Folder No.A3137-3191, ŠM, MOFED.

¹¹²⁸ Informants: Bulča Dāmāqsa and Bātru Admasé.

¹¹²⁹ Spencer, 120

As mentioned earlier, excess expenditure over revenue was a major characteristic feature of government finance since the tenure of Mahtämä Sillassé Wäldä Mäsqäl. In this regard, the greatest share of government expenditure was claimed by the defense and security. In the first five years of Yilma's tenure, "roughly 20% of government expenditure went to the Ministries of Defense and Interior."¹¹³⁰ Even though the government has adapted a policy of deficit financing, the deficit being financed mainly by external aid and banking operations, Yilma and other authorities in the government could not alleviate the situation for many years. It is noted that "supplementary budgets were required for each year from 1961 through 1965."¹¹³¹ Even in the later years of Yilma's tenure, a retired expert remembers, problems related to excess of expenditure over revenue were getting worse. Yilma and his associates were deeply troubled especially by the unending finance requests from defense and police forces. Even in the cases of legally allocated budget, there had been administrative problems that made the execution of imbursement difficult. For instance, due to the irregularity of cash flow, it was difficult even to execute the legally approved budget of defense forces. Hence, higher military officials put intense pressure on authorities in the Ministry of Finance (including on Yilma) to get the required money as soon as possible.¹¹³²

For instance, a dispute between Yilma Déréssa and Lieutenant General Märäd Mängäša over the extra-budget which amounted more than Eth \$ 895,000 since the 1955 E.C.(1962/63) fiscal year payable to the members of the MAAG illustrates the situation in which Yilma was taking on public responsibilities and his individual position in this regard. The Minister of Defense, referring to the contract into which the Ethiopian government entered with the United States

¹¹³⁰ Assefa Beqele and Eshetu Chole, 55.

¹¹³¹ Bulcha Demeksa, "The Ethiopian Budget":372.

¹¹³² Informant: Bulcha Dämäqsa.

Government to contribute Eth \$ 1.5 annually for the cost of MAAG, revealed that it had collected approximately Eth\$ 605,000 and requested the remaining Eth \$ 895,000.¹¹³³ Yilma Déréssa, explained that the amount of money that the Ethiopian government in its own part allocated to MAAG was only Eth \$ 1.2 and the extra-budget amounting Eth \$ 300,000 was approved by the parliament. However, Yilma kept on arguing, the parliamentary approval of the aforesaid money took place at the end of the budget year of 1955 E.C. and that made impossible legally to the Ministry of Finance to authorize payment. Hence, Yilma recalled in his letter, he reminded orally the Chief of Staff to follow the necessary legal procedure to get the money from the Ministry.¹¹³⁴ The later rather preferred to communicate the Ministry of Defense which in turn wrote a letter of appeal to the Prime Minister.¹¹³⁵ Accordingly, Aklilu Habtä Wäld wrote a letter to Yilma requesting the imbursement of the extra-budget.¹¹³⁶ However, Yilma replied to Aklilu that the money would be given if and only if the request followed the legal procedure in the coming fiscal year.¹¹³⁷

A year or two later, budgetary issues related to the military expenditure seems to have bothered Yilma and his associates. A look at the suggestions for deficit financing by a committee, Yilma being the chairperson, and submitted to the Council of Ministers in the fiscal year of 1957 E.C. (1964/65) clearly reveals the extent of the budget crisis which the government was facing. Discovering the budget deficit amounted to Eth \$ 55,296,786 in the second quarter of the fiscal year, the Ministry of Finance had given written notification to the Council of Ministers of the

¹¹³³ Lieutenant General Märäd Mängäša to *Şāhafi Tizaz* Aklilu Habtä Wäld, June 23, 1964. Folder No. A 912-956, *ŞM*, MOFED.

¹¹³⁴ Yilma Déréssa to *Şāhafi Tizaz* Aklilu Habtä-Wäld, July, 14 1964. Folder Folder No. A 912-956, *ŞM*, MOFED(See Appendix X).

¹¹³⁵ Lieutenant General Märäd Mängäša to *Şāhafi Tizaz* Aklilu Habtä-Wäld, June 23, 1964. Folder No. A 912-956, *ŞM*, MOFED.

¹¹³⁶ *Şāhafi Tizaz* Aklilu Habtä-Wäld to Yilma Déréssa, June 25, 1964. Folder No. A 912-956, *ŞM*, MOFED.

¹¹³⁷ Yilma Déréssa to *Şāhafi Tizaz* Aklilu Habtä-Wäld, July 14, 1964. Folder No. A 912-956, *ŞM*, MOFED.

budget situation on 14 December, 1964. The Council, then, formed a committee consisted of eight members that would examine the situation and come up with recommendations.¹¹³⁸ Having held five consecutive meetings in December and January 1964, the committee had submitted a memorandum to the Council of Ministers on 4th January 1965. The recommendations aimed partly at temporary and partly at sustainable solutions. By temporary solution I mean that it was proposed to resolve the financial problem the government faced only in the 1957 E.C. fiscal year. By sustainable I mean that the suggestions focused on relatively long-term reforms in government expenditure and revenue.

Unforeseen revenue from different sources including the Ministry of Mining (Eth \$ 10 million) was the first to be considered in the recommendations of the committee for deficit financing. However, reallocating expenditures from the approved budget for the 1964/65 fiscal year was one of the major solutions proposed by the Committee. For example, from the total amount of money (Eth \$38,713,869) planned to extract for deficit financing, exactly Eth \$10 million meant to be taken from the expenditures of the defense (Eth \$7million) and police (Eth \$3 million) forces. The committee chaired by Yilma remarked that it was unfair to allocate some 35% of its annual budget for defense and security purposes for a country like Ethiopia which was aspiring to develop. Having emphasized the adverse effect of too much expenditure on defense and security, the committee argued that the key solution to the country's internal security would be nothing other than economic development.¹¹³⁹

¹¹³⁸ The Committee members were Yilma Déréssa, Getahun Täsäma, Akalä Wärq Habtä Wäld, Mīnasé Lāmma, Mammo Tadäsä, Īndalkačāw Mākonīn, Major General Īyasu Māngāša and Mulatu Dābābā. “*Yä’gānzāb Ministēr Yä’finansīna Yä’bāgāt huneta lä’ministroč mikir bet yaqārābāw mastawāša*” File No. 145, Folder No.62.1.23.08, NALA.

¹¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

Overhead expenses of government departments were also considered as one source of deficit financing. Accordingly, the committee recommended a 30% cut to save some Eth \$ 4 million. The committee, expecting Eth \$2.5 million cutback, also suggested suspending the recruitment of new employees and the imbursement of salary increase in all governmental institutions. Furthermore, the committee proposed to defer all expenses (Eth \$ 2.2 million) under miscellaneous schedule, printing and publication costs, purchase of automobiles, house and office furniture. Part of expenses for malaria prevention (Eth \$ 2 million), road construction (Eth \$ 2 million), construction of office building for the Ministry of Post, Telegraph and Telephone (Eth \$ 500,000) and subsidy to the Hailä Sillassé Trustee Foundation (Eth \$ 200,000) were also included in the proposed deficit financing. One can estimate the extent of the budget crisis at the time as the Committee proposed the sale of state property and shares in the hope of saving some Eth \$2 million and claimed the dividends of Ethiopian Electric Light and Power Authority and Telecommunications Agency to collect Eth\$ 1.2 million.¹¹⁴⁰

What were more important among the recommendations for the general budget crisis put forward by the committee under the chairmanship of Yilma Déréssa are the suggestions that dealt with the need to administrative reform, expand the tax base of the country's revenue and reorganize the budget process. Cognizant of the fact that the overhead costs of government departments were financially taxing, the committee suggested that a main committee for general administrative reform (including provincial administration) would conduct a study for the alignment and the reshuffling of departments before the approval of next annual budget. To save expenses due to Ethiopia's ambitious engagements in diplomacy, the committee even proposed the closure of some of Ethiopian legations overseas. A veteran economic expert recalls,

¹¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

for example, how difficult hosting time and again the representatives of African states in Addis Ababa had been financially especially at the formative years of the Organization of African Unity.¹¹⁴¹

Instead of subsidizing the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the form of budget, the committee advised the Council of Ministers that the government could assist the Church to reform its administration and to create conducive environment to enhance its independent earnings. In order to check the adverse trend of spending money against the regulations of the Ministry of Finance among Chartered government agencies and municipalities too, the committee proposed budget synchronization between the expenditures of chartered agencies and other government departments. A plan to exploit the skilled and unskilled labor force of the military personnel was also another issue included in the memorandum submitted to the Council of Ministers. In this regard, the committees specifically pointed out that the labor force could engage in and make commendable contribution to road and water works constructions especially in collaboration with Ethiopian Road Authority. As delays in development projects would result similarly in the suspension of state revenue, the committee moreover recommended the possible intervention of the Ministry of Finance in the cases of such delays.

Besides, noticing the urbanization process in the country, the committee put forward some additional sources of state revenue. For instance, with the development of infrastructure, the committee argued, the price of land in towns would increase usually and a 'Capital Gains Tax' could be levied from towns which benefited from road construction. 'Town development tax' and 'estates tax' from inheritance of family property were also recommended not only for deficit financing but also to expand the tax base of government revenue. The committee

¹¹⁴¹ Informant: Bulča Dämäqsa.

suggested that the rate of land tax had to be in direct proportion to the amount of income that the land would generate. Needless to say, “until 1967 the land tax had been levied only on the bases of its size (*gaša*) and type (fertile, semi-fertile and poor).”¹¹⁴²

The inspection of defense expenditures appears to be such a burning issue during the meetings that the committee strongly advised the immediate formation of an audit committee comprising civilian and military higher officials. Furthermore, in order to expand the narrow tax base of the government, the committee also proposed the formation of another committee consisting of fiscal experts that would conduct a research in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance. With regard to the budget process, in its report, the committee complained of an established budgetary process in the Council of Ministers. According to Fiscal Year Proclamation of 1959 and the 1955 Revised Constitution, five major institutions and an individual were engaged in the main stages of the budget time-table and these were particular government department, the Ministry of Finance together with Planning Board, the Council of Ministers, Parliament and the Emperor.¹¹⁴³ The committee complained that this process was problematic for two major reasons. First, it was a lingering process and, second, after the Ministry of Finance submitted the first draft to the Council of Ministers, some ministries requested again additional money to their estimated

¹¹⁴² Eshetu Chole, “The Structure of...,” 50.

¹¹⁴³ “On July 8th”, Bulcha explained, “a whole year before the start of the fiscal year for which the budget was being prepared, the Ministry of Finance sent a letter to the ministers asking for their proposals in respect of estimated expenditures of the governmental activities under their control. The letter specified that the ministerial estimates were to be submitted to the Ministry of Finance by October 10th. The ministries had therefore just over three months in which to prepare their proposals. Then, the Ministry of Finance submitted his proposal for the budget (known as the first draft) to the Council of Ministers not later than January 8th. Thus, the Ministry of Finance, or, strictly speaking the Budget Preparation Department, had three months in which to compile the budget from the ministerial proposals. The Council of Ministers used to submit the draft budget proclamation to Parliament not later than March 24th, having had two and a half months-for its deliberations and possible amendments. The parliamentary deliberations had to be concluded not later than June 8th, and by that date the budget in the form approved by Parliament had to be submitted to the Emperor. Following its approval by the Emperor the budget had been issued as a proclamation, published in the *Negarit Gazeta*. Not later than June 22nd the Budget preparation department communicates the details of departmental budgets to the departments concerned and to Budget Execution Department of the Ministry of Finance.” Bulcha Demeksa, “The Ethiopian Budget”: 372-73.

expenditure. This prolonged unnecessarily the debate at the budget committee of the Council of Ministers. Hence, the committee chaired by Yīlma, proposed the approval of recommendations by the Parliament without second time making round discussion in the Council of Ministers. Unfortunately, the office of the Council of Ministers rejected the suggestions of the committee due to the alleged opposition from government departments the budgets of which were about to be reduced for deficit financing. Moreover, the committee was communicated that it was not appropriate to submit a report to the Emperor with plenty of grave problems.¹¹⁴⁴ An oral account supports this trend of shying away crises reports from the attention of the Emperor because it was believed that such reports of economic calamity would threaten his health.¹¹⁴⁵

Yīlma, frustrated and confounded by imperial orders (*'mazäza'*) especially for individual and institutional purposes in later years, preferred to deal with this practice through delegation. Indeed, after the expulsion of *Şāhafē Tizaz Wäldä Giorgis Wäldä Yohannīs* and the elevated position of the Office of the Prime Minister, Yīlma was receiving imperial order directly from *Ato Sīyum Harāgot*.¹¹⁴⁶ Bulča recalls that Yīlma did not respond positively as he received an imperial order from the Emperor's office or the Office of the Prime Minister. Most often, he simply dropped the letters into his drawers the space of which was eventually filled with such orders. He then called upon his associates to make discussion on them. This meant that he wanted to engage in negotiation with the Emperor, though he didn't feel comfortable about it. Especially orders for personal benefits was said to disappoint Yīlma as he couldn't see any positive economic outcome of national interest from it.¹¹⁴⁷ Though the annual budget of the Ethiopian government exceeded Eth \$515 million a year before Yīlma's transfer to the Ministry

¹¹⁴⁴ "Yä 'gānzāb Ministēr Yä 'finansīna Yä 'bāgāt huneta lä 'ministroč mīkīr bet yaqārābāw mastawāša" File No. 145, Folder No.62.1.23.08 , NALA.

¹¹⁴⁵ Informant: Bulcha Demeksa.

¹¹⁴⁶ Sīyum Harāgot to Yīlma Déréssa, July 14 1968, Folder No, A5158-5208, ŠM, MOFED.

¹¹⁴⁷ Informant: Bulča Dāmāqsa.

of Trade, Industry and Tourism in early 1969, due to unending request of expenditure from all government departments and agencies, a day to day business for Yīlma and his associates at the Ministry of Finance continued to be difficult and arduous.¹¹⁴⁸

Among the problems that used to confront Yīlma was the unwillingness of individuals and institutions to send revenue collected under their jurisdiction to the Ministry of Finance and a tendency to spend it on a project they planned without the approval of the Council of Ministers and the Parliament as per the tradition of budget process. His associates, therefore, reminded authorities and individuals to pay tax and send government revenue to the Ministry.¹¹⁴⁹ For instance, as early as 1961, Yīlma opposed the proposal to build a police college using revenue (Eth \$ 2.1 million) collected from prison authority and kept in the hands of finance officers of the Police Forces. Due to Yīlma's strong resistance, however, the building of the college was postponed and eventually cancelled.¹¹⁵⁰

Yīlma, besides his key position in the Imperial Government of Ethiopia as a Minister of Finance, he was engaged with different government affairs throughout 1960s. As discussed in the previous chapter, Yīlma had a keen interest in the expansion of modern education in the country and was eager to take on public responsibility. Despite his preference of the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts, Yīlma could only preside over the Board of Governors of Haile-Sillasse I University since April 1961.¹¹⁵¹ Starting from then until 1970, Yīlma and other members of the Board discussed various issues and made important decisions upon the

¹¹⁴⁸ Compared to the 1963/64(1956 E.C.) annual budget (Eth \$ 350 million), it shows nearly a 50% increase. *Addis Zāmān*: Hamle 5, 1955 E.C.; *Addis Zāmān*: Sānē 22, 1958 E.C..

¹¹⁴⁹ Informant: Bulča Dāmāqsa

¹¹⁵⁰ Minutes of Meeting at the Ministry of Interior, Dated September 15, 1961, Folder No. 10/34, File No. 17.1.1.184.04, NALA.

¹¹⁵¹ Contrary to Paulos Milkias's information on the period of Yīlma's service as president of Board of Governors, a minute of the University indicates clearly reveal that Yīlma served the Board as a president since April, 1960, not 1962. Paulos Milkias, "Yālma Dāressa" 2014, 47a. Minutes of Board of Haile-Sillasse I University, Dated April 11th, 1961. IES, MS 2463(A).

University. At the first two sessions, for instance, the Board discussed the nomination of a management body to the University. Though the session on 4th May, 1961 ended up with disagreement, members of the Board nominated *däğazmač* Zäwdé Gäbrä Sillassé and Dr. Siyoum Gäbrä Īgzi'abhér for the University presidency. Interestingly, the Board made knowledge of the country's culture and tradition the major criterion for nomination. Furthermore, the candidate needed to have some sort of reputation among the public. Only two members casted their vote in favor of the *däğazmač* and the remaining six denied him theirs. Hence, the Board concluded its meeting without electing the University's president as per the agendum.¹¹⁵² It is obvious that it was Kassa Wäldä Maryam who became the first Ethiopian President of the University in 1961.¹¹⁵³ Meanwhile, the Board transferred Eth \$ 4 million collected from the public in the form of fund raising for the establishment of a university from an account of the Ministry of Education to a Bank account of the Board of Governors.¹¹⁵⁴

In the speech Yilma made on the occasion that the various colleges were brought together to form the 'Haile Sillasse I University' in 1961 after the Emperor officially bestowed the Gännätä Leul Palace to the University, Yilma emphatically stated that the Board members(including himself) would preserve historical and materials of cultural heritage in the main building of the University(. Yilma also promised to work hard to make the University one of the leading African Universities in terms of education and culture. Furthermore, he made note of the plan to make the University truly an Ethiopian educational institution.¹¹⁵⁵

¹¹⁵² Minutes of Board of Haile-Sillasse I University, Dated May 4th, 1961, IES MS 2463(A).

¹¹⁵³ Richard Pankhurst, "Kasa Wäldä Maryam" in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 3 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 352a.

¹¹⁵⁴ Yilma Déréssa Speech on the occasion of establishing Haile Sillasse University, *Addis Zāmān*: Tahsas 10, 1954 E.C.; Minutes of Board of Haile-Sillasse I University, May 4th, 1961, IES, MS 2463(A).

¹¹⁵⁵ Yilma Déréssa Speech on the occasion of establishing Haile Sillasse University, *Addis Zāmān*: Tahsas 10, 1954 E.C.

In the consecutive meetings of the Board, diverse administrative, financial and political matters were consulted quite widely under the presidency of Yīlma. Before the 1960 coup, the selection of a new site for the university was an agenda put on repeatedly in the Board (Committee) meetings while it was chaired by Mahtämä Sīllassé Wāldä Mäsqāl. Especially on its November 8th meeting, the Committee had selected *dāğazmač* Balča *sāfār* to be a site for the new university.¹¹⁵⁶ In general, issues related to budgeting, expansion of campuses and student protest dominated the agenda of the meetings throughout 1960s. Other matters in which Yīlma and the rest of Board members engaged included: the releasing of additional Eth \$2 million and Eth \$2.3 million budget for the fiscal year 1962/63(1955 E.C.) and 1963/64(1956 E.C.) respectively,¹¹⁵⁷ aid from United States of America for the construction of buildings, financial status of the fund raised from the general public for the University,¹¹⁵⁸ the selection of teaching hospital for the University,¹¹⁵⁹ induction of university Service¹¹⁶⁰ and indigenization of the university in terms of academic and administrative personnel.¹¹⁶¹ As to student protest, for instance, the Board had taken serious disciplinary measures against politically active students as a result of the 1962 poetry reading on the annual College Day and the 1968 Fashion Show crisis.¹¹⁶² As handling political issues related to student protest with Board members of diverse social and institutional origin was a taxing business, I found it difficult to mark out Yīlma's individual view and decision in the Board.¹¹⁶³ However, as a passing reference, it can be mentioned that in a meeting

¹¹⁵⁶ Minutes of Board of Haile-Sillasse I University, October 7th, October 11, October 12, November 5th November 8, November 12th and December 10th, 1960, IES, MS 2463(A).

¹¹⁵⁷ Minutes of Board of Haile-Sillasse I University, August 16, 1961, IES, MS 2463(A).

¹¹⁵⁸ Minutes of Board of Haile-Sillasse I University, May 20, 1967, IES, MS 2463(A). (See Appendix XI)

¹¹⁵⁹ Minutes of Board of Haile-Sillasse I University, October 17, 1960 IES, MS 2463(A).

¹¹⁶⁰ Minutes of Board of Haile-Sillasse I University, March 9, 1964 IES, MS 2463(A).

¹¹⁶¹ Minutes of Board of Haile-Sillasse I University, January 7, 1963 IES, MS 2463(A).

¹¹⁶² Balsvik, 106, 108 and 109, 213, 217 and 218. Minutes of Board of Haile-Sillasse I University, Dated October 25th, 1968, MS IES 2463(A).

¹¹⁶³ Members include *Abba* Habtä-Mariam Wārqnāh, Princes Hirut Dästa, *Līg* Kassa Wāldä Mariam, Wībīšāt Dīlnāsahu, Akalā-Wārq Habtä-Wāld. Abābā Rāta and others. *Ibid*.

at the beginning of the 1966/67(1959 E.C.) academic year with Chairperson of Student Affairs Committee James Paul and Dean of Students Gilles Pion, Yilma Déréssa stressed “the importance of freedom of discussion and more debates on Ethiopian and international problems involving students, staff, and government officials.”¹¹⁶⁴ Yilma believed that “students lacked information on government and international problems.”¹¹⁶⁵

7.2. The Last Years of Yilms’s Official Government Service (1969-1971)

It was on February 19, 1969 that Yilma was transferred from the very Ministry in 1941 he formed and administered intermittently for nearly 17 years to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism.¹¹⁶⁶ No available source revealed what Yilma felt about it. However, his protégé at the Ministry (Bulcha Demeksa) and a family member (Igigu Dämüssé) assumed that the transfer was more of a political decision arguing that Yilma was always surpassing the Prime Minister and any other high government official who had the Emperor’s ear. Bulcha wrote:

*Yilma was precipitously transferred to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and it sent a shock wave throughout the entire government, for Yilma was not just an ordinary minister. But it was not altogether unexpected. There was a quite tug of war between Yilma and another favorite of the Emperor-the Prime Minister Aklilu Habte-Weld who had an older brother as a political advisor.*¹¹⁶⁷

Bulcha assumed that the Emperor became too old to run the government as he had done so far and he relied on the advice of especially Aklilu and Yilma. As Yilma excelled everyone in the Council of Ministers in all government matters, technocrats around the Prime Minister felt threatened by his influence over the Emperor. Instrumental to Aklilu’s disfavor against Yilma

¹¹⁶⁴ Balsvik, 170.

¹¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶⁶ Sälämon Gäbrämariam to Yilma Déréssa, Hamle 6, 1962 E.C., Folder No, 1/1-y Personal File, MOFA.

¹¹⁶⁷ Bulcha Demeksa, *My Life My...*81.

was, Bulcha bitterly accuses, his older brother Akalä-Wärq Habtä-Wäld. This was the second time when Yilma was ousted from the center stage of Ethiopian politics. In 1966, the Emperor attempted to reform (or appeared to reform) the Government by delegating more power to the Prime Minister who would choose his own cabinet and be responsible directly to Parliament. It was widely rumored that Yilma Déréssa might be the Emperor's choice for the premiership. But it was not to be.¹¹⁶⁸

Though it is very difficult to argue that Yilma was denied premiership because he was an Oromo, there had been a latent ethnic tension among civil servants especially in the late 1960s due to the growth and suppression of the Mäçça and Tuläma Self Help Association.¹¹⁶⁹ For example, "when the issue of General Tadässa Birru was discussed, even such high officials as Yilma were kept out because they were Oromo."¹¹⁷⁰ Here, it is important to see the difference between Yilma's being an Oromo and Yilma's personal belief and behavior as an Oromo nationalist individual. Sofiya Yilma strongly argues that her father was a proud Oromo who, for instance, very much enjoyed to converse with his relatives from Gimbi only in *Afaan Oromo*. His favorite traditional food was *ançottee* (a stew from root crop, famous in Wälläga) prepared by his older sister Yäšimäbét Déréssa. However, Yilma, like his father, was never involved in Oromo nationalist movement.¹¹⁷¹

¹¹⁶⁸ Informant: Bulča Dämäqsa

¹¹⁶⁹ Olana Zoga, (1985 E.C.)

¹¹⁷⁰ Bulcha Demeksa, *My Life My...*, 83.

¹¹⁷¹ Informant: Sofiä Yilma



Figure 8: Yılma Déréssa, the bureaucratic state functionary in his office at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism in 1971.¹¹⁷²

Indeed, his alleged rivals could take every opportunity to accentuate his social background and manipulate it to work against him. A scholar on the Imperial Government of Ethiopia, for example, opined that Yılma “appeared to be making preparations to stay in politics after the Emperor's departure, a fact which leads him, among other things, to affect the air of a

¹¹⁷² In Sofya Yılma's Possession.

fervent radical, and apparently to seek a political base among the [Oromo]s, of which he was the leading representative on the government.”¹¹⁷³

Not far from this supposed explanation for Yilma’s ouster from the political center stage, another view reflected in a literature with regard to his transfer to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism is the publication of a book by Yilma in 1967. Paulos Milkias noted that “some assume that the attention Yilma Deressa lent in his monograph to the Oromo invasion of high-land Ethiopia in the 16th century was a major reason for the anti-Oromo elements in the government to pressure the Emperor to retire Yilma.”¹¹⁷⁴ This is also an assumption. Indeed, given the context of emerging nationalist sentiment within the government apparatuses in late 1960s, it seems a plausible argument. Still, it is a far-fetched speculation to create cause and effect relationship between the publication of the book and Yilma’s retirement. As the whole account of the Book is covered in the next chapter, suffice here to say that the Emperor was not strange to the content of the Book even before its publication.¹¹⁷⁵

Not to play down the above-mentioned hypothetical explanations, however, to capture a full picture of his transfer from the key Ministry to other institutions and his gradual retirement from state politics, it is important to examine the performance of the Ministry of Finance in 1968/69(1961 E.C.). For instance, the ever-growing budget deficit crises that shock the Ethiopian

¹¹⁷³ Clapham, 173-174.

¹¹⁷⁴ Paulos Milkias, “Yilma Dêréssa” in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, eds. Alessandro Bausi and Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 5 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014), 47b

¹¹⁷⁵ Informant: Asfaw Damtê

government at the end of 1968 is said to have been the major factor for the transfer of Yilma Déréssa to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism.¹¹⁷⁶

A careful look at documents produced by the Auditor General and the Budget Committee of the Lower House of the Imperial Government clearly show that in 1968-69(1961 E.C.), there was a serious budget crisis. The government was faced with this acute crisis both in its revenue and expenditure side of the annual budget. A report of the Auditor General indicates that out of the total revenue estimate by the Ministry of Finance for the fiscal year 1968/69(Eth. \$ 526.883, 000), only Eth. \$ 429,027,000 was collected and the Ministry of Finance failed to collect the remaining Eth. \$ 97,856,000 which amounts to 18.6% of the total revenue. Similarly, a total of Eth. \$566,387,000 was approved for public expenditure for the same fiscal year. However, it was only Eth. \$ 459,505,000 that the Ministry could pay out. Therefore, the government was short of nearly Eth. \$ 106,882,000(19%). Though the budget crisis of the 1961 E.C. was severe, similar problems had occurred repeatedly since 1957 E.C. The report by the General Audit Office expressed its sharp criticism against the Ministry for its recurring failures.¹¹⁷⁷ Shiferaw Jammo, in his commendable work on Ethiopian economy, pointed out that “up to the mid-1960s, current revenues fell short of current expenditures. General services, defense and security absorbed significantly large proportions of the current budget and accounted for the rapid growth of public expenditure during the the second half of the 1960s and in the early 1970s.”¹¹⁷⁸

¹¹⁷⁶ J.H. Williams to A.G. El Emary “Office Memoranda”, June 13, 1969, Records Center Room HB-1, 1969-71 Box No. 106-11, World Bank Archives(Shared by Surafel Gelgelo, Department of History, Addis Ababa University)

¹¹⁷⁷ Report of Auditor General Office for 1961 E.C. Budget Year, pp.2-5, 14,15,18-20,31 IES,MS, 3401; Report of Auditor General Office for 1960 E.C.pp.22,32 IES,MS, 337; Budget Year nutes of the Budget Committee of the Parliament of Imperial Government, Ginbot 17, 1959, IES, MS, 338; Minutes of the Budget Committee of the Parliament of Imperial Government, Miazia 18, 1960E.C. IES,MS, 339.

¹¹⁷⁸ Shiferaw Jammo,33.

As to the 1961 E.C. budget crisis, the Ministry of Finance was said to have submitted a report to the parliament and set out the following four reasons for the revenue shortfall: the closure of the Suez Canal, the impact of import substitution on custom revenue, ever-increasing public expenditure and the fall of coffee price at the international market. However, the report of Auditor General Office rejected all these explanations and linked the crisis to the underperformance of the Ministry in revenue estimate. The report shows that the Ministry included in its revenue plan earnings from uncertain foreign loan, profits from nearly launched government firms such as Assab Refinery and from taxes not yet imposed. All these, the report concluded, led to revenue shortfall. As to the deficit in public expenditure too, the report again made strong criticism against the Ministry for its faulty plan especially in its estimate of capital budget the major source of which was foreign loan and aid.¹¹⁷⁹ Here, an insightful remark made at that moment deserves quotation:

*Even though these expenditures are unbalanced the problem of financing them remains relevant. The problem becomes worse because of the fact that in Ethiopia as in most underdeveloped countries, it is difficult to rely on voluntary savings for development purposes. Both for financing expenditures and for providing savings, therefore, taxation is a very important instrument. Taxation, in this respect, has special significance because since it is by and large a domestic means of financing development, it can cut down the heavy reliance on foreign capital.*¹¹⁸⁰

That being so, both oral information and written sources unanimously explain that the amount of government expenditure was significantly increased every year whereas, the revenue (especially the tax base) remained more or less the same.¹¹⁸¹ For instance, accountable authorities of the Ministry explained clearly to the budget committee of the Lower House of the Imperial

¹¹⁷⁹ Report of Auditor General Office for 1961 E.C. Budget Year, 2-5, 14,15,18-20,31 IES.MS, 3401.

¹¹⁸⁰ Assefa Bequelle and Eshetu Chole, 56.

¹¹⁸¹ Report of Auditor General Office for 1961 E.C. Budget Year, 20; Informants: Tädla Täšomä, Buläa Dämäqsa.

Government that among the lists of public expenditure, it was the military budget that indicated remarkable increase for the 1960 E.C(Eth \$ Eth. 4 53 million).¹¹⁸² Furthermore, the annual expenses allocated for the purchasing and maintainance of vehicles as well as the abuse of public authomobils were said to be one of the issues raised in a discussion by a budget committee.¹¹⁸³ Oral information also gives a similar picture of public finance in the period under discusioin.¹¹⁸⁴

Eventually, Yilma was said to be tired of issues related to additional expenditure and the recurrent financial crisis due to the budget deficit.¹¹⁸⁵ Consequently, “Yilma carried far more weight with the Emperor than most of the other ministers, and usually got his way, but he might not care to dispute the issue with a strong ministry like National Defence, and if any minister is really determined to get funds for a particular project he usually succeeded.”¹¹⁸⁶ However, the juniors who replaced Yilma and his protégé since 1969 acted differently.¹¹⁸⁷ Commenting on Ato Mamo Tadässä who was appointed Minister of Finance after Yilma, an Office Memoranda of the World Bank reads as follows:

*The Finance Minister works well, as his predecessor did not, with Ato Belai, the commissioner for planning and has drawn on the Commission's staff, largely expatriate, to aid the commission of enquiry. They have been used particularly to examine the inadequacies both of estimates of revenue and control of expenditure, to which Yilma Deressa finally fell a victim. In the process they have turned up substantial tax evasion, particularly by public sector and certain large commercial enterprises, on which the Finance Minister seems determined to take action.*¹¹⁸⁸

¹¹⁸² Minutes of the Budget Committee of the Parliament of Imperial Government, Ginbot 14, 1959, IES, MS, 338.

¹¹⁸³ Minutes of the Budget Committee of the Parliament of Imperial Government, Miazia 18, 1960, IES, MS, 338.

¹¹⁸⁴ Informants: Tädla Täšomä and Bulča Dämäqasa

¹¹⁸⁵ Informant: Bulča Dämäqasa

¹¹⁸⁶ Clapham, 170.

¹¹⁸⁷ Informant: Ašānafī Šifāraw; J.H. Williams to A.G. El Emery “Office Memoranda”.

¹¹⁸⁸ J.H. Williams to A.G. El Emery “Office Memoranda”.

Oral information corroborates the financial situation during Yilma's tenure's as quoted above. Among the public sectors that became a target of Mammo's uncompromising measure was the Ethiopian Tourism Commission. Both Habtä-Sillassé and Ašānafi Šifāraw recalled that his institution used to enjoy a tax free policy under Yilma's terms of office.¹¹⁸⁹ Given these developments, therefore, it sounds plausible to conclude that the budget crisis might have substantial contribution to Yilma's dismissal from the Ministry of Finance.

Like any *Šum Šir* (promotion and demotion) in the imperial government, the event on February 19, 1969 was ceremonious. At about 3:30 PM, a number of officials were summoned to the grand palace and Prime Minister Aklilu presented his candidates to the Emperor one by one for various positions. Yilma was there for appointment as if his transfer to another Ministry of less importance from the key Ministry of Finance wasn't demotion. He expressed his pleasure at the occasion and left the palace. Yilma began his new job closely with Bāqāla Īndāšaw, a Vice-Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism who was appointed the same day.¹¹⁹⁰

The first thing Yilma did in the Ministry was to visit the institution and examine the status of its human resource. He had stopover at all departments and sections, interviewed officials in charge there. When he did so, Bāqālā recalls, he did it seriously. Yilma noticed that the Ministry had only a skeleton staff and had no enough experts who would carry out technical job. Accordingly, with the consultation of the Central Personnel Agency, Yilma hired about 10 to 15 university graduates without more ado. Much work had been done to revise some of Commercial regulations. Yilma continued his style of management in this Ministry too. He shared powers to his subordinates, listened carefully others once he invited them to official meetings, and prepared

¹¹⁸⁹ Informants: Habtä Sillassé Tafāsā and Ašānafi Šifāraw

¹¹⁹⁰ Informant: Bāqālā Īndāšaw

work plans in the form of memorandum. He had the habit of visiting offices of juniors suddenly and used to give orders in a polite manner. Yilma reminded his associates to submit their progress report in his office.¹¹⁹¹

Compared to his previous position as a Minister of Finance, indeed, Yilma exercised less power and influence in government politics after 1969. Apparently, his major source of influence was the Emperor's request for Yilma's frequent advice and decisions almost on every issue in Ethiopian economy. Though his power was in decline, no change was said to be seen in Yilma's energy and spirit after his transfer. Even the scanty sources on Yilma's tenure in this Ministry reveal that he accepted government duty responsibly.¹¹⁹² For instance, no matter how infrequent, Yilma met the Emperor after 1969; the manner in which he greeted and talked to him shows that he was in good terms with the monarch. Yilma discussed government matters with the Emperor at most relaxation and simplicity. Despite the Emperor's tight schedule, Yilma could take considerable time while others were waiting for their turn to meet the Emperor in the latter's office at the grand palace.¹¹⁹³ Yilma could also organize an exhibition that the Emperor and other dignitaries saw in 1971 in compound of the National Lottery.¹¹⁹⁴ When he was dismissed from the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism to join the Crown Council on 19th August 1971, Yilma was energetic as he had been before and he never got bored with his responsibility.¹¹⁹⁵ In short, he appeared to take business as usual.¹¹⁹⁶

¹¹⁹¹ Informant: Bäqāla Īndāšaw.

¹¹⁹² *Ibid.*, Tāklā Šadiq Mākūria, *Yä 'hīywāt Tariké*, 220-220.

¹¹⁹³ Informant: Bäqāla Īndāšaw

¹¹⁹⁴ Informant: Yāmanā Īgīgu

¹¹⁹⁵ Archive of Ministry of Pen, Personal File of Yilma Déréssa, a draft letter without date and an official seal. Dictated to me through telephone on April 16, 2015 by Archivist of the Ministry of Pen, Anonymous.

¹¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

When Yīlma was made a member of the Crown Council in 1971, he was 64 years old. The assumption that the Crown Council may have been provided a place of dignified retirement for senior officials seems to have proved right in the case of Yīlma.¹¹⁹⁷ For instance, members of the Crown Council had no office where they met. Hence, they stayed at home, including Yīlma, until the Emperor summoned them for advice. It was during this time that Yīlma gained respite from tedious government responsibilities of nearly four decades and could visit regularly his farms in areas such as Sululta (pork farm) and Mākanisa (Dairy farm). During those years, Yīlma began his daily tasks at home first listening to his favorite Amharic song “*almāṭam qārāhuñ*” every morning.¹¹⁹⁸ Until he was summoned to participate as a member of constitution drafting committee in March 1974, he might have accepted no government responsibility of urgent nature.¹¹⁹⁹

To summarise, this chapter has attempted to sketch out Yīlma’s public life in the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism. Yīlma had firm conviction that a technocrat would perform better when he/she was fully empowered in an institution. He had always prioritized professional competence over social status in the government of Ethiopia throughout 1960s. Although he was open-minded to his subordinates in the Ministries, conversely, he was criticized for not being transparent and accountable, for example, to the Auditor General’s Office. The irony is that the very person who was credited for making the Ministry of Finance one of the most potent forces representing modernization in Ethiopia failed to provide government documents for finance inspection. Besides, a person distinguished among his associates for his personal interest in systemic and structural issues, failed also to handle the

¹¹⁹⁷ Interestingly, except *Lī’ul ras Māngāša Sīyum*, all my informants take Yīlma’s membership of the Crown Council as a condition of retirement. Informants: Sofya Yīlma, Bulēa Dāmāqsa, Māngāša Sīyum; Clapham, 125.

¹¹⁹⁸ Informant: Sofya Yīlma

¹¹⁹⁹ Tāklā Ṣadiq Mākuriā, *Yä’hiyywāt Tariké*, 256.

budget deficit that eventually cost his influence in Ethiopian government. This chapter, therefore, has examined these flaws of the subject of the study briefly. The scanty literature on Yilma Déréssa attributed the ethnic factor for his eventual retirement from Ethiopian politics since late 1960s. Given the gradual surfacing of ethnic tension within the Ethiopian government, his Oromo social background seems to have led decision makers in the government to the option of Yilma's retirement as the Emperor reached into advance old age. However, the persistent budget crises reveal that his expulsion was due to weak performance of the Ministry under his tenure especially in late 1960s

Chapter Eight

Yilma Déréssa beyond Official Government Service:

Literary Works, Folktales about Him and Personal Life

Having examined Yilma Déréssa's newspaper articles and two history books, one can clearly see that an aspect of his life account might be considered a literary biography. Hence, as Leon Edel argues, "the task begins with the reading and evaluation of the subject's work[s]; it extends to other form of criticism, the weighing and evaluation of evidence, a function legalistic or juridical, requiring hardheaded logic [and] a good sense of reality."¹²⁰⁰ Likewise, a critical look at some political humors, the origin of which is attributed to Yilma, circulating among the urban folk indicates that Yilma's witty personality was utilized as a critical voice by emerging bureaucrats in the imperial government. The argument here is that "politics can be represented in a humorous manner and humor can have a serious intent."¹²⁰¹ Though challenging to reconstruct some parts of Yilma's private life, the available sources imply that he had gone through a relaxed life with his happy family only until the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution. The major objectives of this chapter, therefore, are to appraise Yilma's historiography, to examine the folktales associated with his personality and to reconstruct his personal life as well as his last days (till his death in 1979).

8.1. The Writings of Yilma Déréssa

Reprinted in 1941 as a forward for an Amharic anthology under the title, *Yadis Zāmān Māzmur Sīlā'nāṣanāt Kibūr*, Yilma wrote three but interrelated newspaper articles that appeared in the consecutive early publications of *Addis Zāmān*. He also produced a very small volume history book, in English, *Byzantine Empire and The Crusades*, in 1965. Titled, *Yä Ityopiya Tarik*

¹²⁰⁰ Leon Edel, 130.

¹²⁰¹ Popa and Villy Tsakona, I.

Bä'Asra Sidistāhaw Kiflā Zāmān(trans., “*Ethiopian History in the Sixteenth Century*”), Yilma also brought out another history book in Amharic a year later. Not only from what he wrote but also from oral information and his personal book collections in the hands of his daughter, Sofiya Yilma, one can assume that Yilma did enjoy reading. Especially, some young educated technocrats of the Imperial Government and others who had a conversation with him on various social, political and historical issues recall that Yilma was intellectually domineering.¹²⁰² In this regard, until the emergence of a new generation in the 1960s, Spencer commented, “Yilma and *Dedjazmatch* Zewde Gabre Sellassie were the only Ethiopian officials in his experience who attempted to keep up with current literature.”¹²⁰³ Similarly, Richard Pankhurst comments that “Yilma was considered in the 1950s as an example of the new generation of modern, able young officials-one of the hopes of the country.”¹²⁰⁴

Yilma’s newspaper articles appeared in the very early publications of *Addis Zāmān* in June 1941. The first piece of writing was published on *Sāné* 7, 1933 E.C.(First Year Number 2) under the title “Yä’gǧīmočīna Yäléločīm Māṣahīft Aṣaṣaf”(trans. “The Ways of Poems’ and other Prose Writing”). With a relatively long opening remark, Yilma explained why he was obliged to write piece of article. He stated that a number of poems and prose fictions had been written in Amharic in emotional response to the liberation of Ethiopia from the Fascist Italian rule.¹²⁰⁵ However, Yilma argued, the content of the majority of the verses was weakened by the writers’ excessive focus on rhyming. Addressing the writers of the verses directly, he explained that a poem was valued primarily for its meaning, not for its versification. Interestingly enough, he attempted to strengthen his argument referring to the poetic style of the *Book of Psalms* while it is basically

¹²⁰² Informant: Täšomä Gäbrä-Mariam, Bā’idä-Mariam Mäkonin, Mulugeta Itäfa and Bäqälä İndäšaw.

¹²⁰³ Spencer, 120.

¹²⁰⁴ Richard and Rita Pankhurst, 148.

¹²⁰⁵ *Addis Zāmān*:*Sāné* 7 1933.

written up in prose. In connection with this, Yīlma used a biblical metaphor which is a common form of Amharic prose as he attempted to explain the jubilant mood of Ethiopians at the immediate aftermath of the Italian rule.

On the next issue, the then weekly *Addis Zāmān* issued Yīlma's piece of writing on Theatre. Yīlma admitted that no one brought to them a theatre play until the time of his writing. He stressed that the genre in Ethiopia was introduced before the Italian invasion and playwrights such as Yoftahé Nīgusé, Mälaku Bāgosāw and Haddis Alāmayāhu had produced some commendable works. Yīlma also held up these pioneers "as examples of dramatic writing, which younger authors ought to follow."¹²⁰⁶ Though far from reality, he compared this trend in Ethiopia before the Italian rule with Shakespearean era in England and the period of Moliere in France. He requested authors to submit their creative works to them so as to resume this beginning that was interrupted because of the Italian Occupation (1936-1941). Yīlma in his piece of writing also urged playwrights not to make their primary focus on criticism against government and the miserable life experience of Ethiopians under fascist occupation. As Ethiopia began its new era, he emphatically insisted, plays had to be written in the manner that they would incite spectators to diligence and happiness, instead of grief and remorse.¹²⁰⁷

Lastly, Yīlma's piece of writing on *Addis Zāmān* discussed history writing and novels.¹²⁰⁸ Hammering on the need for objectivity and precision in history writing, Yīlma noted that history is an important discipline, hence, should be written with profound thought. Commenting on some books he probably read, he wrote as follows:

¹²⁰⁶ Albert X. Gerard, "Amharic Creative Literature: The Early Phase" *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 6, No. 2(JULY 1968):48.

¹²⁰⁷ *Addis Zāmān:Sānē* 14 1933 E.C..

¹²⁰⁸ *Addis Zāmān:Sānē* 21 1933 E.C.

በውነት ላይ መጨመር ወይም ከውነቱ ማጉደል አድልዎም ማድረግ ለታሪክ ጸሐፊዎች የተገባ ነገር አለመሆኑን ባለማወቅ አንድ አንድ ታሪክ ጸሐፊዎች በጠባብ ሐሳብ ያንዱን ሕዝብ አኗኗርና አስተያየት ብቻ ተከትለው የጻፉ አሉ። ሌሎች ግን የዓለምን ሕዝብ ሐሳብና አኗኗር ተመልክተው ትርጉሙን አስፋፍተው ይጽፋሉ። ዛሬ የዓለምን የፖለቲካ፣ የኢኮኖሚክና የሕዝብ አኗኗርን ስንመለከት ጸሐፊዎችን በጠባብ አስተያየት ታሪክ እንዲጽፉ አንመክራቸውም። ለሕዝብ ከሌላው ዓለም ሁለተኛው ታሪክ ለብቻችሁ የምትኖሩ ናችሁ ብሎ መስበክ ስህተት ያመጣል።

*Not being cognizant of the fact that it is unfair to historians to fabricate and omit facts as well as be subjective, some authors have written history with ethnocentric view. Some others, having examined the thoughts and customs of the peoples of the world, have written history in broader perspective. Given the contemporary political, economic and social life of the peoples of the world, we don't advise them to write history narrow-mindedly. Preaching peoples that they can live in isolation too would lead one to make mistake.*¹²⁰⁹

As Yilma attempted to illustrate his points with examples especially for the ethnocentric views on history, he discussed Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Likewise, he also mentioned the then Anglo-Ethiopian relations as an example for the interdependence of nations. In conclusion, Yilma remarked on the meaning and uses of novel. As he utilized some modal verbs with their negations predominantly in his short newspaper articles, one may argue that the major purpose of these pieces of writing was somewhat instructive.¹²¹⁰

Most probably some weeks after the publication of these issues of *Addis Zāmān* in June 1941, an anthology of poems and prose was published under the title *Yadis Zāmān Māzmur Silānāṣanāt Kibīr* to which Yilma's pieces were included as forward. With a total page of 150, this

¹²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²¹⁰ In language usage, modality is usually indicated via the use of modal verbs (such as 'should', 'must', 'ought to', 'may', 'has to', 'could'), and their negations ('may not', 'could not', 'should not', 'will not' and 'must not'). "It is a result of moral choices and they are indications of the attitudes, judgments or political beliefs of the writer." John E. Richardson, *Analyzing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 59, 62.

compilation included the creative works of 35 authors excluding the forward.¹²¹¹ Among these poems, the compilers (probably Yılma was one of them) included the works of famous writers such as Kābādā Mika'el ("Agār Nīgus Nāṣanāt Bandira") and Bīrhanu Dīnqé ("Mālkī'a Iti'yopīya" with long opening remark). The creative works of at least three female writers, namely wāyžāro Mīsalé Tī'umä Līsan ("1928 Amāt"), Bīzunāš Mākonīn ("Sīlā Gīrmawī Nīgusä Nāgāst Wulāta"), Mulumābet Gābrä Tāklé ("Sīlā Gīrmawī Nīgusä Nāgāst Wulāta") were also incorporated in the anthology. Not few poems appeared without titles. Some others have long titles and few were published with introductory remarks. The longest poem, apparently without title, was written by Kābādā Asfaw and it covered 15 pages. According to Joana Mantel-Niecko's periodisation, the publication of this anthology *Yaddis Zāmān Māzmur* "marked the beginning of the last period of Amharic literature in 1941."¹²¹² She argues that the difference between the literature written from the middle of the 19th century up to 1935 and that written after 1941 is exhibited, among other factors, by the transition of the Shewa variant of Amharic from the phase of its general diffusion to the stage when it began to be widely used as a written language. This difference is also visible in the further development of literary genres which previously had only just begun to be practiced, including above all novels, plays, and later, short stories, while social themes began to play an increasingly greater role in them.¹²¹³ Although

¹²¹¹ Yā Iti'yopīya Wāṭat Dāraṣiwoč, *Yadis Zāmān Māzmur Sīlānāṣanāt Kībīr*, (Addis Ababa: Mārha Tībāb Printing House, 1933 E.C.)

¹²¹² Her focus, Taye and Shiferaw (2000) commented in their review, "is all the time on how the Showan variant of Amharic was gaining greater acceptance and turning into the standard linguistic form of writing. She notes that the political elite not only encouraged the development of Amharic literature but also facilitated the 'standardization' of the language through the opening of the printing presses, the launching of newspapers, and the use of this language variant in the administrative, educational, cultural and political life of the nation." See Taye Assefa and Shiferaw Bekele, "The Study of Amharic Literature: An Overview" *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 33, No. 2, Special Issue (November 2000):40.

¹²¹³ Joana Mantel-Niecko, "Ethiopian literature in Amharic." In *Literature in African Languages: Theoretical Issues and Sample Surveys*, ed. B. W. Andrzejewski, S. Plaszewicz, W. Tysoch, (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna State Publishing House, 1985):315.

Yilma's pieces were timely reflections on the essences of these genres in Amharic literature, Mantel-Niecko (1985) failed to appraise it.

Commended to the general reader as a brief account,¹²¹⁴ Yilma also produced a 37 page-long history book in English in 1965. The publisher was Haile Selassie I University Press to which institution he was the president of the Board of Governors for many years. Though difficult to trace why and how he prepared this history essay, bearing in mind that Yilma followed the graduate studies curriculum in history at Georgetown University, U.S.A. during his tenure as Ethiopia's ambassador to the United States and the United Nations (1953-58), it is fair to assume that he would write the essay for course or seminar assignment on the topic.¹²¹⁵

Yilma's short history essay put forward two interrelated arguments. First, the Crusade was an important factor in speeding up the disintegration and fall of the last Roman polity, the Byzantine Empire. Second, the Crusades served as the vehicle for the transition of the history of Western Europe from medieval to modern. In Europe, Yilma emphasized, "modern history was born with the Crusades, and as such, they were the prototype of a new Western civilization which reached its fullest expression during the Renaissance."¹²¹⁶

He argued that the economic, social and cultural advances which were made in Western Europe during the period were considerable. Focusing on the economic consequence of the Crusades, Yilma wrote that the Crusades contributed to the dissolution of feudalism by placing properties on the market. The increase in the volume of trade in the West which was the result of the

¹²¹⁴ Edward D. Myers, "Forward" in Yilma Déréssa, *Byzantine Empire and the Crusades* (Addis Ababa: Haile Selassie I University Press, 1965) not paginated.

¹²¹⁵ Except for oral information, however, his personal files at the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as documents in the family members's possession could not provide written evidence on the alleged attendance of Yilma at the University, Paulos, 46b.

¹²¹⁶ Yilma Deressa, *Byzantine Empire and the Crusades* (Addis Ababa: Haile Selassie I University Press, 1965), 1-3.

Crusades gave birth to thriving medieval trading and manufacturing cities in Italy, Germany, Flanders and elsewhere in Europe. Crusade, for instance, was the prelude to Venetian and Genoese hegemony in the Levant, and the beginning of Western economic and political imperialism in the East.¹²¹⁷ Explaining his point further, Yılma wrote that the development of the art of warfare and the development of systematic taxation were the heritage of the West from the Crusades. Knowledge of mathematics, science, literature and art, were some of the beneficent results of contact with the Byzantine and Saracen worlds. In addition, Yılma added, through the long range travels of the western missionaries into the heart of Asia, knowledge of geography was developed and many travel books were written which helped the Western people to travel to the end of the globe.

Interestingly enough, in his attempt to give a historical background to the Crusades especially in connection with the general conditions of the Byzantine Empire, Yılma appeared to have taken an opportunity to situate Ethiopia's place in the international trade prior to the Crusades. He argued that the wide defense measures for centuries by the Byzantine Empire required large expenditures for maintenance and it was through international trade in Constantinople that the empire was able to pay the heavy expenses. Ethiopia, like India, Persia and different polities in the Mediterranean world, "was a channel through which of the Byzantine Empire carried on her trade with Africa."¹²¹⁸

Given the bibliography Yılma included at the end of his short essay, it can be concluded definitely that he produced this booklet using those voluminous works by authorities of the

¹²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹²¹⁸ Yılma added that "the Empire's ships, laden with manufactured articles and traders, called regularly at Adulis. From there, they were accompanied inland by Ethiopian merchants to exchange their articles for gold ingots. Thanks to this badly needed gold, the Empire for centuries was able to keep the value of its currency at parity and also was in a position to meet the large deficit trade with China and the rest of the East." *Ibid.*, 10.

subject matter probably during his graduate class at George Town University.¹²¹⁹ Some of the bibliographic information of the works listed was not complete and the essay lacks verifiability as far as source citation is concerned. As a result of this, it is difficult to appraise the originality of his thesis (central idea) and his arguments put forwarded in the book. Even there is nothing new about the thesis of this short essay. Alexi Vasiliev, whose book Yilma cited as a reference has already argued that “the epoch of the crusades is one of the most important in the history of the world, especially from the point of view of economic history and general culture. For a long time, the religious problem pushed into the background the other sides of this complicated and manifold movement.”¹²²⁰ The discussion on the “influence of the Crusades upon the civil liberty of the peoples of Europe, their civilization, and the progress of knowledge, commerce, and industry”¹²²¹ was embarked on at the very beginning of 19th century. Nonetheless, presenting such a long and complex development with its historical background only in 37 pages is a considerable merit of this short essay. The plain language utilized and the good paragraph compositions can be considered also as the strength of the essay.

Compared to the abovementioned pieces of writings, Yilma’s much renowned work is his Amharic book on Ethiopian history. Its relative success is said to begin at the very day of its distribution probably in November 1966 (*Hidar* 20 1959 E.C.).¹²²² It is noted that interested readers bought the book with great interest. Merid Wolde Aregay, an eminent historian on the period, remarked that readers showed great interest in the book not because the author was a

¹²¹⁹ The works cited in the bibliography in their order of appearance as follows: A.A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire*, Madison, 1952; Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. J.B. Bury V, 292; Anna Comnena, *Alexias*, II 9 ed A. Reifferscheid; L. Brehier, *Vie Et Mort de Byzance* (Ed. Albin Michel Paris); A.A. Vasiliev, *Charlemagne and Harun-al-Rashid*; Steven Runciman, *Byzantine Civilization* 1933 and *The Cambridge Medieval History* Vol. IV.

¹²²⁰ Alexi Vasaliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire, 314-1453*, Vol.II (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1952), 389.

¹²²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²²² Paulos Milkias gave us 1967 as the date of publication. See, 47b.

prominent person but because people were intensely curious about the history of their country.¹²²³ My key informant claimed that about 10 thousand copies (4 thousand hard cover and 6 thousand paperback) were published at the *Birhanina Sälam* Printing House.¹²²⁴

Previously, the book has been published twice. Based on a legal agreement with the copy right holder, a new publisher reprinted the second edition in 1999 E.C.(2006) exactly forty years after the first publication. Following similar legal procedure, the latest reprint has appeared eight years later in 2007 E.C. In terms of content, there is no substantial difference among these reprints. However, the second and the third reprints have shown some changes in their language usage in the sense that two outdated and derogatory terms, namely 'Galla' and 'Wällamo', were replaced by 'Oromo' and 'Wällayta' respectively upon the request of the publisher. Sofya Yilma recalls that the initial request to substitute these terms came from the publisher. With strong conviction that her father had no intention to utilize these terms in his book half a century ago to offend peoples, she responded positively.¹²²⁵ Hence, except for on one or two pages, these terms were replaced throughout the book.¹²²⁶ Indeed, as any contemporary educator of Ethiopian history understands, reprinting the book with all the recurrent derogatory terms is politically wrong. This would offend a segment of the intended readers.

Though it is difficult to trace the time when Yilma began writing this book, documents from his personal file from the Ministry of Finance reveal that he had been collecting source materials for the history of the period as early as 1947. Most probably because a certain Mr. R.B. Rothrock, a foreigner working at the State Bank of Ethiopia had close contact with booksellers in Europe,

¹²²³ Merid Wolde Aregay, review of 'Yä' Itiyopiya Tarik Bä'Asrasädistäñaw Kiflä Zämän, *Dialogue* 1, No.1, 1967, 84.

¹²²⁴ Informant: Asfaw Damtë

¹²²⁵ Informant: Sofya Yilma

¹²²⁶ Even if how the proof readers attempted to replace these offending terms, the words appeared in the second and third reprints on pages 105 and 238.

Yilma requested him to procure selected books and periodicals on the history of Ethiopia in his letters to him in June and July 1947. Yilma specifically stated that he might be glad if Mr. Rothrock would add to the list “Chronicle of the Reign of Libne Dingil (Wonag Sagad) sometimes called David(1508-1541)”. Yilma also notified Mr. Rothrock that he ‘should prefer the English text, but should it not be available, the French text from Paris would do very well.’¹²²⁷ During his ambassadorial tenure in Washington, he is said to have written part of the book.¹²²⁸

From Yilma’s periodization of Ethiopian history from 1264 E.C to 1957 E.C. (not 1959 E.C) into different eras, one can infer that the closing year seems to have marked the completion of the writing of the book. Oral information also corroborates this circumstantial evidence. For instance, when Yilma and his associates travelled to Washington in September 1965 (1957 E.C.) for the annual summit of the World Bank, Asfaw Damtšé recalls, he broached the matter with Yilma and talked about the delay of the publication of the book. Yilma admitted that the government, as it did on other literary and creative works, imposed censorship on his book. In this respect, needless to say, first the Ministry of Pen under a *Ṣāhfē Ti’zaz* and later the Ministry of Information were in charge of censorship in Ethiopia.¹²²⁹

My key informants strongly believe that Yilma’s book came under censure from the Ministry of Information for more than a year. They claim that the Emperor had read the book before its

¹²²⁷ Yilma Déréssa to Mr. R.B. Rothrock, July 2, 1947, Personal File of Yilma Déréssa, HO, MOFED; Mr. R.B. Rothrock to Yilma Déréssa, July 3, 1947, Personal File of Yilma Déréssa, HO, MOFED.

¹²²⁸ Informant: Täšomä Gäbrä-Mariam

¹²²⁹ Censorship was based on a broad premise that ruled out public mention of anything disagreeable, critical, discouraging, disparaging, and divisive, and conversely, laid heavy, often unbearable stress on the positive. Dissonance was enjoined, harmony was ordained. Censors acted within the broad limits set by this premise. See Markakis, 333; *Negarit Gazeta* No 28, 1942, A Proclamation to Provide for the Control of Printing Presses, 31st October 1942; *Negarit Gazeta* Order No. 1 1943, An Order to Define the Powers and Duties of Ministers, 29th January 1943; Minutes of Meeting on Censorship at the Ministry of Information, May 13, 1967, Folder No 5.1.1.01, NALA ; Document about the takeover of Responsibility by Amarä Wäru to administer the Censorship Office at the Ministry of Information, 14th October, 1964, Folder No 5.1.1.01, NALA.

publication.¹²³⁰ Though Yılma did not reveal that the monarch was reading his book, he confided more than once to his close associate as a passing reference that the Emperor commented on his book.¹²³¹ It is also argued that the censorship imposed on it was due to sensitive issues Yılma raised in the book that would put at risk the country's foreign relations with Somalia and Middle East States. Upon Yılma's complaint about the delay of publication during their government business conversations in the palace, the Emperor invited higher officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Information to see the manuscript whether it comprised some avoidable statements and expressions. Accordingly, Mīnasé Lāmma and Kātāma Yīfru joined the two in the discussion. Despite the emperor's wish to have the opinions of Mīnasé and Kātāma on Yılma's book vis-a-vis Ethiopia's foreign policy, both of them declined to accept the recommendation in a pretext that they had less experience and knowledge on these matters than Yılma. Finally, Yılma proposed that the Emperor would make the decision after he read the book. Having read the manuscript, thus, the emperor is said to have ordered the publication of the book at the *Bīrhanīna Sālam* Printing House free of charge.¹²³²

As stated in the acknowledgement of the book, three individuals seem to have played crucial roles in the preparation of the book: Ar'aya Sirak, Bulcha Demeksa and his wife Elisabeth Wārqīnāh. Ar'aya is said to be a graduate of Oxford University and a close friend of Yılma despite considerable age gap between them. Ara'aya was one of the educated young people who used to enjoy the intellectual discussion with Yılma at different social gatherings. He was a regular visitor of Yılma at his home. The two worked together discussing issues page by page.

¹²³⁰ Informants: Bulča Dāmāqsa and Asfaw Damtē

¹²³¹ Informant: Bulča Dāmāqsa

¹²³² Informant: Asfaw Damtē.

Ar'aya also helped Yilma a lot in language editing.¹²³³ Bulcha was also given an assignment particularly to look out the usage of dates in the book as there is a seven or eight years difference between the calendar of some source materials available in foreign languages and the Ethiopian calendar. No basic change, Bulcha recalls, was made in the content of the book except, perhaps, some rearrangements in the order of chapters. Bulcha admits that he never saw Yilma's original autograph manuscript.¹²³⁴ However, it is claimed that censors at the Ministry of Information corrected some derogatory terms against the Somali.¹²³⁵ Yilma's gratitude went also to his wife, Elisabeth especially for her effort in organizing source materials and giving a moral support that enabled him to persist in his work.¹²³⁶

Though some informants do emphasize the substantial contribution of *Bilata Déréssa Amänté* particularly to the part of the book that discusses the history of the Oromo in the 16th century,¹²³⁷ Yilma declined to give due credit to his father for unknown reason. However, *Bilatta Déréssa* was one of the persons who read and made constructive comments on the manuscript. Basically, Yilma's interest for Ethiopian history in general and Oromo history in particular was unthinkable without the pivotal role of his father. Most family members recall that no topic other than history used to dominate the discussion between father and son.¹²³⁸

Categorically speaking, Yilma's work is a political history.¹²³⁹ Except for some brief recounting of aspects of economic and socio-cultural conditions in the period under discussion, the book

¹²³³ Informant: Sofya Yilma.

¹²³⁴ Informant: Bulcha Dämäqsa

¹²³⁵ Informant: Asfaw Damtse

¹²³⁶ Yilma Déréssa, *Yä 'Ityopiya Tarik...*, not paginated.

¹²³⁷ Informant: Täšomä Gäbrä Mariam

¹²³⁸ Informants: Sofiya Yilma and Bīrhanä Déréssa.

¹²³⁹ It dealt chiefly with historical developments related to the state, its rulers and their rivalries. Here, I utilize the term 'political history' as is defined by John Tosh. According to him, political history is the study of all those aspects of the past that have to do with the formal organization of power in society, which for the majority of human societies in recorded history means the state. It includes the institutional organization of the state, the com-

focuses essentially on conflicts and wars between the rulers of the Muslim kingdom of Adal and the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia.¹²⁴⁰ Particularly, it “deals mainly with the wars of Ahmad Grañ [and] the demographic movement of the Oromo.”¹²⁴¹

As mentioned earlier, Yılma divided Ethiopian political history from 1270 to the 1964/65 into four periods. The first covers the period between the coming into power of Yikuno Amlak(1270) to the beginning of the reign of Emperor Naod(1508). The second dealt with Ethiopian history from Naod(1508) to Emperor Ya’iqob(1603/04). The next covers an extended period from Emperor Ya’iqob (1603/04) to the end of the reign of Emperor Tewodros II(1868). The next one hundred years beginning from the death of Emperor Tewodros to the completion of the book (1957 E.C.) constitutes, according to him, the fourth part of Ethiopian history.¹²⁴²

Yılma described the first period (1264-1508) briefly as an era of peace, prosperity and cultural development. He compared especially the cultural achievements of the time with the artistic elegance of the Axumite period and even argued that some military and political accomplishments of this later era excelled the achievements of the ancient period.¹²⁴³ Contrary to this period, Yılma wrote, the years between 1508 and 1604 were times of chaos and crisis. As the devastating war by *Imam* Ahmäd destroyed many things that had been built and accumulated in the previous period, he argued, the period could be characterized as a period of resistance.¹²⁴⁴ By way of forward, Yılma seem to have refrained himself from characterizing and discussing the later two periods.

petition of factions and parties for control over the state, the policies enforced by the state, and the relations between states. Tosh, 109.

¹²⁴⁰ For instance, Yılma discussed briefly about ‘*Gimğa Waša*’ ‘*Gimğa bet*’ (royal treasury) where the resources of an Emperor was deposited in the period under discussion. See Yılma Déréssa, *Yä Ityopīya Tarik...*, 36-37. Otherwise, about 60 % of the book (from page 52 to 200) is allotted only to the 15 years war.

¹²⁴¹ Bahru, “A Century of...:22.

¹²⁴² Yılma Déréssa, *Yä Ityopīya Tarik...*, 5.

¹²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

The book comprises 40 chapters with 8 pictures in a total of 248 pages. The insertion of these photographs and sketches obviously help readers to comprehend the narrative somewhat visually. Except for the brief discussions on diplomatic developments between Ethiopian rulers and European states in relation to the conflict, the book narrates principally the whole story of war that lasted for more than 15 years in the first half of the 16th century. Specific battles occupy the center stage of the narration.

From his attempt to explain the rationale for his selection of the 16th century as a period of discussion, one may notice how contemporary politics could influence the study of the past especially in popular history. As discussed in chapter six, it is relevant to recall here that Yılma was one of the Ethiopian diplomats who designed some of the country's foreign policies towards Africa in response to developments particularly in Somalia and the Middle East. Bearing this in mind, it is important to examine carefully his statements in the book that Ethiopian heroes laid the foundation for the freedom of African peoples in their age-long anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist struggle since ancient times. The history of Ethiopia in the second period, Yılma asserted, illustrates this experience. He argued that the battle of Šimbıra Kuré is one of the major battles that Ethiopians fought against imperialism like that of Adwa (1896) and Mayçäw(1936).¹²⁴⁵

Pragmatic that his book was, thus, it overemphasized the intervention of Ottoman Turkey in the conflict between the Muslim Sultanate of Adal and the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia. Yılma put *Imam* Ahmäd Ibrahim's (nicknamed *Grañ*, meaning 'the left-handed') war in a context of the alleged Ottoman Turkish imperialism. In short, he characterized Ahmäd *Grañ* as a local agent of

¹²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*,7.

Ottoman Turkey.¹²⁴⁶ Not to gloss over Yilma's emphasis on the international nature of the prolonged war, in his causal explanations both for the war of *Imam* Ahmad and the Oromo population expansion, he described some Somalis in a as agitators.¹²⁴⁷

Given the complexity of the historical developments in the 16th century, and more importantly, government responsibilities that Yilma had taken, one needs to consider the relative merits of the work. First, as there had not been many Amharic books on Ethiopian history at the time of its publication,¹²⁴⁸ Yilma made a modest, yet meaningful, contribution to satisfy the interests of readers. Second, he wrote the book in a native language to "a public that felt more at home in Amharic than in English."¹²⁴⁹ In this regard, his usage of plain language helped readers to follow the story without much difficulty. Yilma also tried to avoid hypercriticiss and language of excessive flattery and adulation which were common among Ethiopian writers.¹²⁵⁰ Third, the general historical context that he presented in chapter one as a background to the 16th century developments deserves due credit. This certainly enables readers to comprehend developments that happened later on. Furthermore, his insight into the disparate interest groups of the Sultanate of Adal and his argument how the conflict was escalated against the wish of, for instance, the merkantile ruling class of the Muslim Sultanate can be considered as an important merit of the book.¹²⁵¹

What also made the book worth reading is its fair treatment of the history of the Oromo population expansion in the sixteenth century.¹²⁵² Though presented in a chapter, the discussion

¹²⁴⁶ *Ibid*; Merid, review of..., 88.

¹²⁴⁷ Yilma, *Yä' Itiyopiya Tarik*..., 27,49,50, 82, 205,207, 213, 214 and 235.

¹²⁴⁸ Merid, review of..., 84.

¹²⁴⁹ Bahru, "A Century of ...":7.

¹²⁵⁰ Merid, review of...,85.

¹²⁵¹ Yilma, *Yä' Itiyopiya Tarik*..., 26-27 and 49-50.

¹²⁵² Informant: Bäqälä Indäšaw

on Oromo history and culture by an educated Oromo statesman in the 1960s drew the attention of some readers.¹²⁵³ During oral research, the researcher observed that some informants even referred to Yilma's work on Ethiopian history in the 16th century as a book about Oromo history. A family member recalled that the book had received considerable attention especially from Oromo nationalists during the transition period in the early 1990s.¹²⁵⁴ Despite its medium of writing (Amharic), the book won considerable acceptance among the Oromo. As to the language of the book, it is pertinent to point out that Yilma also utilized, if not introduced, some *afaan Oromo* vocabularies such as "*mälka*" (river bank suitable to cross a river easily) *Ekäraa* (spirit of the dead) *kaakaa* (terrace) as vocabularies of Amharic form in the book.¹²⁵⁵

However, retrospectively, the book also came under criticism for its usage of an outdated and derogatory term, '*Galla*', to refer to the Oromo people. Yilma, however, clearly stated that it was the Amharas who identified the Oromos as 'Gallas' implying that the Oromo did not call themselves 'Galla'.¹²⁵⁶ He believes that the word 'Galla' is a foreign word to the Oromo. Bulcha argued that "Yilma sometimes refers to them as 'Gallas' to be understood by his generation."¹²⁵⁷ Though Yilma was reluctant to avoid totally the name 'Galla' which was referred to the same people interchangeably with the term 'Oromo' in his work, his marked preference for the use of

¹²⁵³ Informants: Sofya Yilma, Bulcha Dämäqsa, Mulugeta Itäfa, Täšomä Gäbrä Mariam, Bäqälä Indäšaw,

¹²⁵⁴ Informant: Sofya Yilma

¹²⁵⁵ Yilma Déréssa, *Yä' Itiyopiya Tarik*..., 128, 224 and 242.

¹²⁵⁶ According to Paul Baxter "the exact meaning of 'Galla' differed depending on context and period. Despite many inconclusive and often fanciful linguistic speculations, such as "shepherds" or "strangers who are guests", its origin remains unknown. It was predominantly used by highlanders for the (semi-)nomadic Cushitic, sometimes including Omotic, peoples in the south and east. It usually stood for the Oromo, but also Afar or even Dinka could be called Galla. During the 18th century, the term was often used to refer to non-Christians ("pagan" or Muslims), in contrast to Amara. The Somali and other ethnic groups in the south used the term "Galla" for the Oromo, while "galo" in Somali designates 'infidels' or 'non-Muslims'. The Añwaa lowlanders still use the term G. for highlanders. Bahréy in his *History of the Galla* used the term as the name of the Oromo people who, in the 16th century, successfully invaded the centralized and monarchic Ethiopian state." See Baxter, "Galla" in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 2 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 660b-661a. Yilma, *Yä' Itiyopiya Tarik*..., 212.

¹²⁵⁷ Bulcha, MY Life My, 74.

the term 'Oromo' much more than the derogatory one even in the headings shows that he didn't accept the labeling 'Galla'.

Some scholars, except one, opined that Yilma's treatment of the Oromo population expansion in the book is much less than the topic would deserve.¹²⁵⁸ It is remarked that the subject matter which one would have thought would be of closer interest to the author, is dealt with only briefly towards the end.¹²⁵⁹ Bulcha believes it may be necessary to consider the political situation of the country during the publication of the book. He added that:

*It should be remembered that Yilma was conscious about the censorship of books in his days. Had Yilma gone even a little further into Oromo history, his book would never have seen the light of day. It is quite obvious that Yilma was cautious in order to avoid any obstacle on the way to publishing his book. During the days of Emperor Haile Sellassie, no book that the Palace did not finally approve, could be printed. Had it not been Yilma, no Oromo could have written even the one chapter that Yilma included in his book about the Oromo.*¹²⁶⁰

Though it is not concrete evidence, a careful textual analysis of the chapter corroborates Bulcha's somewhat apologetic explanation. Here, one can provide an important point. Though the argument that Yilma glossed over the apparent conflict between the Oromo and the rulers of Ethiopian states throughout 16th century doesn't sound plausible to me,¹²⁶¹ the fact that he left this chapter even without a conclusion leads one to suppose that Yilma didn't want to delve into this historical issue probably for political reasons. By way of conclusion at the end of the chapter, Yilma would have raised important points about the historical consequences of Oromo population expansion. This apparently would oblige his value judgments as he did in about four

¹²⁵⁸ Merid, review of..., 89; Getachew Haile, *Yä'Abä Bahrey Dīrsätoč Oromowočīn Kāmimälākātu Leloč Sänädoč Gara* (Collegeville: 2002), 54; Informant: Bulča Dämäqsa.

¹²⁵⁹ Bahru, "A Century of...": 22.

¹²⁶⁰ Bulcha, *My Life My...*, 74.

¹²⁶¹ Informant: Bulča Dämäqsa

pages on the discussion of *grañ*'s war.¹²⁶² After the discussion of the victory of Zäntära (Wäyna Däga), for instance, Yilma formulated an extended conclusion about the 15 years of war from page 203 to 207. For it is difficult to question the writing skills of an educated person like Yilma, it would not seem an improbable argument that he failed to give conclusion to the discussion on a history of the Oromo due to either self-censorship or state censorship.

As discussed earlier, at the time of its publication, due to the emergence of Oromo nationalist movement led by the *Mäçça-Tuläma* Self-Help Association that had originally set socio-economic goals at its foundation, magnifying the discourse of Oromo history by celebrated statesman like Yilma Déréssa was politically challenging, if not impossible. Though no sources at my disposal reveals that Yilma "sought a political base among the Oromo" in the 1960s as remarked by scholar, there was perception about him being the leading representative of the Oromo on the government.¹²⁶³

That said, however, the chapter Yilma allotted to Oromo culture and history in the 16th century is said to mark a significant departure from earlier discourse on Oromo in native languages. Not to forget the popular depiction of the Oromo as "pagan barbarian *par excellence*",¹²⁶⁴ some works portrayed the Oromo not only as uncivilized people but also as forces behind the decline of the Ethiopian state.¹²⁶⁵ In such writings "the Oromo were never credited as creators of an original

¹²⁶² Presumably, Yilma's interpretations would either corroborate with the popular discourse that the Oromo is an agent of Christian Ethiopia 'decline' or negates it. Yilma, *Yä' Itiyopīya Tarik*..., 203-207.

¹²⁶³ Clapham, 1969, 174: Informant; Bul'ea Dämäqsa

¹²⁶⁴ Teshale, *The Making of*..., 16

¹²⁶⁵ Yates, 1.

culture, or as having religious and democratic political institutions which flowered in patterns of their own making and nourished their spiritual and material well-being.”¹²⁶⁶

Indeed, “one of the historical problems that have dominated the existing literature on the history of the Oromo is the question of the original homeland of the people.”¹²⁶⁷ This has been attempted to address “by E.Cerulli, I.M. Lewis, E. Haberland, H.S. Lewis, U. Braukamber and other scholars.”¹²⁶⁸ In this regard, there had been a widespread popular view that the Oromo came from Asia through Madagascar and Mombasa (Bobasa).¹²⁶⁹

Yılma is silent about “the Madagascar” tradition, and pointed out that the Oromo belong linguistically to the Cushitic speaking peoples of Ethiopia like the Beġa, Enarya,¹²⁷⁰ Agāw, Gafat,¹²⁷¹ Somali, Afar, Saho. However, he assumed that the Oromo were living in the Horn of Africa between the Gulf of Eden and the then British Somaliland since the dawn of history. Due to demographic pressure from the Somali pastoralists before the 10th century, Yılma argued, the Oromo were forced to leave their earlier home country for an area between the Rivers Wabe Šäbälé and Juba (Benadir). Similarly, Yılma kept on narrating, due to similar pressure from the Bantu people in the south, the Oromo moved northwards to Walabu in Bale at about the tenth century. However, as Tesema Ta’a (2006) noted, this “traditional view that the Oromo occupied most of the Horn of Africa around the shores of the Gulf of Aden at the beginning of tenth century until they were pushed by the Somali is most fully presented by Cerulli (1957) and I.M.

¹²⁶⁶ Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia A History 1570-1860*, (Trenton, New Jersey: The Red Sea Press, 1994), 2

¹²⁶⁷ Tesema, *The Political Economy...*, 17.

¹²⁶⁸ Mohammed Hassen, 4.

¹²⁶⁹ Tayyē Gäbrä Mariam, *Yä Ityopīya Hizb Tarik, Baçir Qal Yäwäta* (Asmara: 1914 E.C.), 33.

¹²⁷⁰ Apparently, Ennarya (Hinnaryo) were an Omotic speaking people belonging to the Gonga cluster. See Jon Abbink, “Ennarya,” in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 2 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 310a.

¹²⁷¹ Taddesse Tamrat stated that “The Gafat is clearly an Ethio-Semitic language in its own right, belonging to the South Ethio-Semitic group.” See “Ethnic Interaction and Integration in Ethiopian History: The Case of the Gafat” *Journal of Ethiopian History*, 21, (1988):123

Lewis (1959,1960). ”¹²⁷² Yīlma’s work is of a similar thesis to Lewis’.¹²⁷³ Certainly, historical sources show that “the Oromo are indigenous to Northeast Africa with a long history.”¹²⁷⁴ Despite the drawbacks of the thesis on the original homeland of the Oromo, in providing historical evidence other than the linguistic data, one can infer from his statement that Yīlma ultimately argued that the Oromo were the native people in the area. Getachew Haile (2002) commented that among all hypotheses on the origin of Oromo written in Amharic, it is Yīlma’s thesis on the origin of the Oromo that Getachew found researchable.¹²⁷⁵

When Yīlma attempted to explain his thesis on the origin of the Oromo in the present Somali inhabited part of the Horn of Africa, he mentioned two things: the remnants of buildings allegedly built by the Oromo in the region and the oral tradition about their home country before Mādä Wālabu. The literature and the oral tradition on the pre-Somali settlement in the region and the ruins associated with the settlers imply that the people were known as the Harla or Harāla, not the Oromo. “Harla is the name of a population that is mentioned in Arabic and Ethiopian historical sources since the 14th century.”¹²⁷⁶ Until today, “oral tradition in the Eastern Ethiopia associate the ruins of houses scattered especially in the Somali and Oromo inhabited areas of Harārgé with the Harla. The present inhabitants ascribe all archaeocological sites or ruins of stone-built necropolis, store pits, houses, and mosques remarkably, frequent in northern Harārgé to the Harāla.”¹²⁷⁷

¹²⁷² Tesema Ta’a, *The Political Economy...*, 17.

¹²⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹²⁷⁵ Getachew Haile, 108.

¹²⁷⁶ Giorgio Banti, “Harla” in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 2 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 1034a.

¹²⁷⁷ Ulrich Braukamper, *Islamic History and Culture in Southern Ethiopia, Collected Essays*, (Lit Verlag Munster: 2004), 17.

In his commendable PhD dissertation, Merid also pointed out that “the Harla are remembered by the Somali of Jijiga, and the Oromo of Babilé and Eastern Charchar as giant Somali who built and populated the many Muslim towns, the ruins of which can be seen in these areas. The Harla name has also survived in a small clan of Somali found to the south of Harar city.”¹²⁷⁸ Far west from Harar “the Käräyyuu in eastern Šäwa say that their region was previously inhabited by the Harla.”¹²⁷⁹ Nonetheless, except for legendary narratives, “it is difficult to obtain reliable information about their historical fate.”¹²⁸⁰ As the Oromo themselves refer to the Haräla as non-Oromo people, one may safely conclude that the oral tradition marked a direct contrast to Yilma’s hypothesis.

Until recently, one target of cultural prejudice in the discourse on the Oromo was its religion. Yilma, allocating some five pages to it, provided relatively the details of Oromo belief system.¹²⁸¹ Yilma “describes Oromo religion, *Waqeffäta*, as a religion in which God is the creator of all things and when the Oromo worship under the Oda tree (sycamore tree), or by a river, or lake, they worship God and not that tree, river or lake.”¹²⁸² Due to the absence of temples among the Oromo, Yilma explained, the worshipers venerate *Waaqaa* under the *Oda* tree holding a bunch of grass called *hirefäta*.¹²⁸³ Furthermore, he mentioned various spirits such as *ayaanaa* (guardian spirit of an individual), *däčé* as well as *qolo* (spirits which live on trees) and *atetetee* (guardian spirit of women). As to *atété* which is also known as *ayo* and *ayolee* (mother), Yilma explained that it is a fertility spirit and it is venerated especially by sterile

¹²⁷⁸ Merid Wolde Aregay, “Southern Ethiopia and the Christian Kingdom 1508-1708. With Special Reference to the Galla Migrations and their Consequences” (PhD Dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1971), 127.

¹²⁷⁹ Banti, “Harla” 1034a.

¹²⁸⁰ Ulrich Braukamper, 16.

¹²⁸¹ Yilma, *Yä Itiyopiya Tarik*..., 223-227.

¹²⁸² Bulcha, *My Life My*..., 73-74.

¹²⁸³ Yilma, *Yä Itiyopiya Tarik*..., 223.

women with a feast for a week praying every evening to give them children and good harvest. Except for the attendance of *abbaa gälma* ('father of the temple') only for his service in slaughtering sacrificial cattle and opening the ritual officially, no male is allowed to attend the week-long ceremony. Women spend the night reciting idolizing poetry for *atété* and performing *däläga* (ritual dance).¹²⁸⁴

Another theme that Yilma emphasized in this chapter was the processes of law making and law enforcement. Law making among the Oromo, Yilma wrote, was an exclusive jurisdiction of the *Lubbaa* (the ruling age group among the Oromo) assembly. *Abbaa Boku* (father of the scepter) presides over the assembly gathered either the *Oda* (sacred tree) or in front of the *abbaa boku*'s residence. Participants engage in a discussion freely to the extent that an individual who found a subject matter or a legal concept too complex or vague to understand in gathering may request the assembly to postpone the session until it becomes clear to him. Any one has the right to oppose a motion at hand and no law shall be proclaimed without the full agreement of all members of the *Lubbaa* assembly.¹²⁸⁵

Yilma also discussed especially the legal procedures of the Oromo justice system whenever victims of crime bring charges against their attackers. Apart from the *abbaa boku*, two judges, known as *dori* and *raabaa*, together with 9 elected juries oversee the litigation even between two individuals. After one party was found guilty of a crime, the culprit had the right of appeal. Yet, the appeal can be heard in the legal assemblage of the same clan that endorse the decision. Rather, he was allowed to bring his case to another clan. Here, Yilma raised an important historical point that this process of appealing was disturbed during the inter-clan war between,

¹²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 224-225.

¹²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 220-221.

for instance, the Tulāma and the Mäçça Oromo as a clan member of one found it dangerous to travel to the country of another clan. Therefore, an agreement was reached between the two clans not to attack individuals who traveled for appeal. In order to distinguish these litigators from others, they were obliged to carry a flag. Apparently, the oral tradition or source materials that Yīlma utilized in this section appears to be collected from either the Mäçça or the Tulāmaa elders.¹²⁸⁶

Compared to his explanation about the Oromo religion and the processes of law making, Yīlma's discussion on the *Gāda* system, except for his positive approach, is less original.¹²⁸⁷ Even so, his attempt to explicate briefly some institutions such as *Abaa Boku* and *Abbaa Dulaa* as well as ceremonies, namely *buttaa* (slaughtering ceremony) and *dägaga* (election of *abbaa boku*) that had been either mentioned as passing remarks or omitted in earlier works in Amharic is commendable. In a nutshell, as an educated Oromo individual, Yīlma presented these socio-political institutions of the Oromo people in direct contrast to some previous prejudiced writings on the culture and history of the Oromo.¹²⁸⁸

Although he failed to prepare the bibliographical list, Yīlma cited his major sources as passing references throughout his book. These include both written and oral sources. Generally, his written materials can be categorized as Ethiopian and foreign sources in different languages. Among Ethiopian sources, Yīlma appears to have utilized *Tarikā Nāgäst*, *Aläqa Asmé* and *Abba Bahrey's* work very much. As to the work of *Abbaa Bahrey*, Yīlma didn't inform us which

¹²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 220-221.

¹²⁸⁷ For instance, *Aläqa Asmé* Giorgis Gäbrä Mäsih provided basic information about the *Gāda* system in his commendable work on the history of the Oromo which is highly critical of the anti-Oromo prejudice. Bairu Tafla, ed., *Aşma Giyorgis and His Work History of the Gällā and the Kingdom of Şāwā*, (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GMBH, 1987), 118-134. Not being free from unbiased judgments on the culture and history of the Oromo, Alaqa Taye Gabra Mariam also dealt with the *Gāda* system. In fact, it was the work of Abbaa Bahrey. *Zenahu Lā'gala*, with the fog of prejudice and ill-feeling towards the Oromo, upon which all writers of the later period including Yīlma Dērēssa ultimately depended. See Getachew Haile, (2002).

¹²⁸⁸ Yīlma, *Yä'İtīyopīya Tarik....*, 217-220.

version he consulted. Märs'e Hazän Wäldä Qirqos was translating Bahrey during the preparation of Yılma's book in the mid 1960s, it is fair to assume that Yılma had an opportunity to consult the Amharic copy borrowing from the translator. Because some names of people and places, for instance, the Maya, the Hadiya, Harqiqo and Biquizär were wrongly spelt in the book, however, it appears that he didn't consult the Amharic or Gi'iz version. He must have utilized the French or the English versions by Ignazio Guidi, *Historia Gentis Galla* (1907) and Wallis Budge, *The History of Ethiopia: Nubia, Abbyssinia*, London (1928).¹²⁸⁹

Four foreign sources, Francisco Alvares, *Šihab Ad Din* alias *Aräb Faqi*, G.W.B. Huntingford and Castanhoso, are also quoted frequently in Yılma's work.¹²⁹⁰ As he most likely read neither Portuguese nor Arabic, it seems that he consulted the translated versions of these books.¹²⁹¹ It is difficult to point out how much Yılma made use of Tedla Hailé's thesis in his book for the thesis was written in French. It is the only secondary source Yılma probably referred to. Interestingly enough, Tedla was the first husband of Elisabet Wärqinä, Yılma's second wife and a cousin of Qidist Täsa, Yılma's first wife.¹²⁹²

Though slightly mentioned, Yılma revealed an important historical data in his book and that were the trenches and cordons that the Anfillo people made were visible until the writing of the

¹²⁸⁹ Merid Wolde Aregay, Review of Yä'İtiyopäya Tarik..., 85.

¹²⁹⁰ Yılma, *Yä'İtiyopäya Tarik...*, 29, 33, 34, 38, 39, 52, 61, 101, 158, 159, 172, 182, 191 and 208.

¹²⁹¹ These three translated versions seems to have been 1) Rene Basset's *Histoire de la Conquête de l'Abbyssinie*, Paris 1897, 2) Lord Stanley of Alderley's *The Prester John of the Indies*. Trans, 1881 or C.F. Beckingham and G.W.B. Huntingford's. *The Prester John of the Indies*, Cambridge, 1961 and 3) R.S. Whiteway, *The Portuguese Expedition to Abyssinia in 1541-1541, as Narrated by Castanhoso with some Contemporary Letters, the Short Account of Bermudes and Certain Extracts from Correa*. London, 1902.

¹²⁹² Richard Pankhurst (1998) noted that "Tedla Hailé Modja Guername studied at the Université Coloniale d'Anvers, (Antwerp, Belgium), in the late 1920s. He wrote his thesis under the title *Pourquoi et Comment Pratiquer un Politique d'Assimilation en Ethiopie* (Anvers, 1930)." See "Tedla Hailé and the Problem of Multi-Ethnicity in Ethiopia" *Northeast African Studies*, New Series, 5, No. 3 (1998):84; Bahru, *Pioneers of Change...*, 85.

book.¹²⁹³ This can be taken as an eye witness account and a significant historical fact for further historical and anthropological studies in Western Wälläga. In fact, Daniel Ayana (1995) has noted that “prolonged conflict and occasional accommodation marked the relationship between the Säyyoo Oromo and the state of Afillo throughout the nineteenth century. The roots of the conflict lay in the desired some of the lineages of the Sayyoo Oromo to settle on the land of the Anfillo and the latter’s attempt to incorporate the Sayyoo area under its control.”¹²⁹⁴

Before I go to my brief reflections upon the limitations of Yilma’s book, a word or two on the method that Yilma utilized in the chapter on the history and culture of the Oromo is in order.¹²⁹⁵ When he referred to the source materials for the chapter, he revealed that oral tradition was one of his historical data. Yilma explained:

ስለ ኦሮሞ ነገድ በዚህ ምዕራፍ ውስጥ የተጻፈው ከብዙ ምንጭ የተገኘ ነው። ከነዚህም ምንጮች መካከል አንዱ ኦሮሞዎች ከጥንት የነበራቸውን ልማድ ተከትለው ታሪካቸውንና ልማዳዊ አንዋንዋራቸውን ሆን ብለው ለልጆቻቸው ስለሚያስጠኑ ከአባት ወደልጅ እየተላለፈ ሲወርድ ሲዋረድ ሲነገር ቆይቶ በዘመናችን ያሉት ሽማግሌዎች ካደረሱልን የአፍ ታሪክ ነው።

*The historical writing in this chapter on Oromo is collected from different sources. One of these historical sources is oral tradition told by the old people of our time. This is the result of a purposeful age-old custom of training children in narrating Oromo history and way of life by word of mouth from one generation to the next generation.*¹²⁹⁶

Despite Yilma’s omission, it is fair to assume that Bilatta Déréssa Amänté was one of these contemporary oral historians of the Oromo people. Many testified that he was well versed in the general history of the Oromo people. Especially his knowledge of 19th century political

¹²⁹³ Yilma, *Yä’Itiyoṗṗiya Tarik*....242.

¹²⁹⁴ Daniel Ayana, “Land tenure and agriculture in Sayyoo-Afillo, Western Wallaga, Ethiopia, 1880-1974” (PhD Dissertation in History, University of Illinois, 1995), 50-51.

¹²⁹⁵ Yilma, *Yä’Itiyoṗṗiya Tarik*.....212, 215, 224, 236, 242.

¹²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*,212.

developments in Wälläga was notable.¹²⁹⁷ As Bahru Zewde remarked, “after 1941, *Bilatta Déréssa* developed a reputation as an Oromo oral historian.”¹²⁹⁸

There are a lot of limitations to Yılma’s book. To begin with, no information was presented from where the author collected or produced the illustrations inserted in the book. Similarly, the work also suffered from absence of source citation and list of bibliography. A close associate of Yılma apologetically tells that the author failed to do so because of lack of time.¹²⁹⁹ However, listing not more than ten major source materials in a book of such kind seems hardly to be a time-taking task. Furthermore, before its publication the draft manuscript was put aside for sometime in the *Bırhanına Sälam* Printing Press due to censorship.

Probably the Achilles’ heel of Yılma’s work is his assumption on the decisive role that the Ottoman Turkey played in the war between the forces of *Imam* Ahmad and Emperor Lıbnä Dıngıl. Due to this presumption, his explanations on the causes of Adal’s aggression tended to be more of cultural determinist. Contrary to this, Merid, in his review of Yılma’s book argued that wealth accumulation was the major cause of the war. Furthermore, he attributed the defeat of the Emperor’s forces at Šımbıra Kuré and other battles erroneously to Turkish military support, while their aid arrived actually in Ethiopia in 1542.¹³⁰⁰ Other limitations of the work as history book include its subjective conclusions with visible moral judgments and its portrayal of Ethiopia as sacred and blessed nation.¹³⁰¹ Though minor, there are repeated misspelling of words and erroneous naming of people and places. Yet, writing a history book on such complex century

¹²⁹⁷ Informants: Mulugeta Itäfa (Dr.) and Bırhanä Déréssa. See also how Terrefe Woldetsadiq was indebted to *Bilatta Déréssa* while he was producing his article. See 73-86.

¹²⁹⁸ Bahru, *Pioneers of Change...*, 75.

¹²⁹⁹ Informant: Bulča Dāmāqsa

¹³⁰⁰ Merid, review of..., 87.

¹³⁰¹ Yılma, *Yä Itiyopiya Tarik...*, 20 and 130.

consulting diverse source materials deserves appreciation. Needless to say, “Yilma had spared some time from his onerous ministerial responsibilities to write a book.”¹³⁰²

8.2. The Folktales about Yilma Déréssa

Yilma was not only a man of letters but also a source humorous stories. Among his contemporaries, he was known for his witty and sensible personality. Some family members even associate such aspect of Yilma’s personality to that of his parents.¹³⁰³ In the literature too, he is portrayed as an ‘entertaining’, ‘astute’ and ‘clever’ statesman.¹³⁰⁴ For more than half a century, a number of political jokes ascribed to Yilma have been told and retold especially among the technocrats of the Imperial Government of Ethiopia. Though the jokes have been circulating mainly among the civilian and military personnel of the Imperial Government itself, as noted below, most of them reveal some aspects of weaknesses and contradictions of the political system and its statesmen. However, the political jokes associated with Yilma havenot drown the attention of scholars hitherto. Indeed, except for Tigab Bezie (2012), no historical study appears to have been conducted hitherto. Tigabi’s thesis focuses on political satires which are manifested mainly in oral poetry, cartoons and caricatures. Hence, his study aims at collecting, presenting and analyzing oral and visual forms of political satires known for their condemnation against their enemy.¹³⁰⁵

¹³⁰² Bahru, “A Century of...,”7.

¹³⁰³ For instance, both his mother Çaltu Sonto and father *bilata* Déréssa were said to be always intolerant of the non-sense.

¹³⁰⁴ Hadis, 228. Tāklā Şadiq, *Yā’ hñywāt Tariké*, 221; Clapham, 29.

¹³⁰⁵ Tigab Bezie, “Political Satire in Ethiopian History, 1913-2005” (PhD Dissertation in History, Addis Ababa University), 2012.

In this section, political humor is defined as “a joke produced by politicians in order to criticize politics and politicians.”¹³⁰⁶ The term, as discussed in the works of Villy Tsakona and Diana Elena Popa(2011), is utilized here not only to describe the political jokes but also to analyze them. Having presented the translated versions of a dozen of selected political humors, this section attempts to make commentary on the explicit and implied meanings of the political jokes. Before that, however, a brief discussion about the folkloric aspect of these jokes is in order.

To begin with, these jokes are formulated in words; accordingly, as Ruth Finnegan (2012) argues, it fulfills the first and most basic characteristic of oral literature.¹³⁰⁷ Furthermore, they are transmitted orally at different social gatherings and work places especially among civil servants and military personnel. “Without its oral realization and direct rendition by ...speaker, an unwritten literary piece cannot easily be said to have any continued or independent existence at all.”¹³⁰⁸ Variations on the form and sometimes content of the jokes also occurred as different informants narrate jokes ascribed to Yīlma. Furthermore, like in any other research on oral tradition, “the questions of authenticity, authorship, locality, and dating”¹³⁰⁹ have been difficult in this research too.

Although legend and historical fact have intermingled in the comic stories ascribed to him, a research in oral history challenged ‘the authenticity, authorship locality and dating’ of some of these political humors. For instance, Yīlma’s joke on the 1960 *coup d’état* appears to be fictitious (see below Political Humor Seven and Eight). While oral tradition produced a political humor about Yīlma and the coup makers, oral history recounts a different incident. By the time the coup was staged in Addis Ababa on Tuesday 13th December, 1960 Yīlma was in Limu district in Käffa

¹³⁰⁶ Popa and Villy Tsakona, 4.

¹³⁰⁷ Informants: Fikrā Sillassé Wägdäräs; Nadāw Zakarias; Täšomä Gäbrä Mariam and Bāyānā Nāgāwo.

¹³⁰⁸ Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Literature in Africa*, (Open Book Publishers, 2012), 5

¹³⁰⁹ Vansina, *Oral Tradition*...., 54-56

province with Īǧǧu Dāmīsé, his son-in-law to visit his private coffee farm. Oral information reveals that whenever the Emperor out of the country, Yīlma preferred to engage in his private businesses, of course, delegating someone at his office.¹³¹⁰ Being out of Addis Ababa as of Monday 12th December, 1960 Īǧǧu Dāmīsé claimed that Yīlma heard of the coup in a remote rural village in Limu. *Ras Māngāša Sīyum* also recalls that he was with Yīlma and Colonel Tamrat Yīgazu, the then Īndārasé of Kāfa, at Ġimma palace until the coup was put down.¹³¹¹

A document at the Ministry of Finance does corroborate this oral history. On Friday *Tahsas* 1, 1953 E.C.(10th December 1960) the then Minister of Commerce and Industry, Mākonīn Hābtā Wāld wrote a formal letter to Yīlma Déréssa calling for a meeting to discuss the price of petroleum on the very day of the *coup d'état*. The letter was received by the Ministry of Finance on Monday 12th December, (Tahsas 3, 1953 E.C.) and an official at the ministry wrote a short note at the bottom of it explaining that Yīlma would be out of the town.¹³¹² By then (a day before the coup), Yīlma had already left Addis Ababa for Limu delegating Abdulahi Mumé. Thus, as stated, Yīlma knew about the coup later on Friday 16th December, 1960.¹³¹³ In a nutshell, one may raise a critical question on the possibility of holding conversation between Yīlma and the coup makers as narrated in the political humours. The joke, therefore, seems to be produced by someone else and attributed to Yīlma. Except for his renowned quick witted character, no available source testifies that all the political humors actually owed their origin to Yīlma.

Correspondingly, the apparent disparity between the folktale and the oral history on the political jokes poses another question why the humors have been attributed to Yīlma. In this regard, oral

¹³¹⁰ Informants: Bulča Dāmāqsa and Sofya Yīlma

¹³¹¹ Informant: Īǧǧu Dāmīsé and Māngāša Sīyum(Prince Ras).

¹³¹² Mākonīn Hābtā Wāld to Yīlma Déréssa, Dated 10th December 1960, , Personal File of Yīlma Déréssa, HO, MOFED

¹³¹³ The coup makers killed Abdulahi Mumé together with many other high government officials. Informant: Māngāša Sīyum.

information confirm that of all government officials (except *dägäzmač* Girmačaw Täklä-Hawariyat) Yilma was essentially a witty person especially known for his quick response, economy of words as well as cutting remark in formal and informal conversation.¹³¹⁴ Once Yilma was recognized for such entertaining personality, informants argue, attributing the political humors that a group wanted to circulate and to be reckoned with to him couldn't be unexpected outcome. As a circumstantial evidence, some even refer to the case of *Aläqa Gäbrä Hanna* who was "a traditional 19th century scholar, the popular hero of innumerable Amharic jokes and humorous stories."¹³¹⁵ Needless to say, "newly invented jokes often being set in the context of modern Ethiopia have been also ascribed to *Aläqa Gäbrä Hanna*."¹³¹⁶

Returning, then, to the list of the jokes, about a dozen of stories are collected during the oral research and the majority of them are recounted by more than one informant. Interestingly, few stories are retold exclusively by one oral informant.¹³¹⁷ The informant reveals that he was one of the formulators of the jokes during their leisure time for the purpose of enjoyment. However, a critical look at both the form (language style) and the content (meanings) of the stories indicates that the humors convey serious messages. Briefly, the political jokes are as follows:

Political Humor One

While Yilma was in the Ministry of Finance, a certain lady came to his office with a royal order(mazäza) from the emperor that authorized the payment of an exaggerated amount of money (some say Eth \$500, others tell Eth \$ 3000) to her so that she could buy perfume. Seeing that the amount was inflated, Yilma said "how stinky the lady was that the emperor authorized such a great amount of money for the purchase of perfume?"

¹³¹⁴ Informants: Nigusé Häbtä Wäld, Habta Silasse Tafese and Mulugeta Itaffa.

¹³¹⁵ Birgit Mattausch, "Gäbrä Hanna" in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 2, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 610a.

¹³¹⁶ Ibid., 610b.

¹³¹⁷ Informant: Täšomä Gäbrä-Mariam

Political Humor Two

In the early days of Yilma's appointment as a higher authority at the Ministry of Finance, he could participate in the meetings of the Council of Ministers with ministers of noble origin. Whenever the nobility requested an annual budget for their departments, Yilma most often allocated less than what they demanded based on the policy priority and the total revenue of the government. Embarrassed by the decision taken by Yilma whose social origin, according to them, was insignificant, complained blatantly in front of him that it was not Yilma that made a mistake; it was rather the emperor who forced them to work with a shepherd. Then Yilma replied, "Yes, cattle need a shepherd."

Political Humor Three:

Haddis Alämayähu, a Minister of Planning and Development in 1960s, was a statesman more known for his classical Amharic novel (Fiqir İskä Mäqabir). During the discussion on the Second Five Year Plan, he insisted the need for explanation from the Ministry of Finance (presumably from Yilma Déréssa) on the existing conditions of the Ethiopian economy. Yilma, not to disclose some financial secrets of the government said to Haddis that Ethiopian economy is not Fiqir İskä Mäqabir.¹³¹⁸

Political Humor Four:

When Yilma was told that Ato Mammo Taddässa was replacing him as a Minister of Finance in 1969, he said "let alone Mammo, Mamité cannot alleviate financial problems in Ethiopia".

Political Humor Five

In the 1960s, Yilma Déréssa never hired anyone in his Ministry whose name did not end with the sound "sa" which is a common ending of a typical Oromo name.¹³¹⁹ Hence, the major question of Yilma's interview to applicants was "what is your name?". As interviewees told Yilma their name ending with the sound "sa" like Ilala Ibsa, Bulča Dämäqsa, and Däräğä Disasa, Yilma hired them immediately. A certain Amhara said to Yilma "İnesa ?/Kassa" meaning what about me?. Thinking that the applicant was an Oromo, Yilma hired him.

Political Humor Six

¹³¹⁸ To this Yilma's blatant remark, Haddis is said to respond "so is it the invasion of Galla?". Informant: Asfaw Damtē.

¹³¹⁹ Bulcha, *My Life My...*, 68.

A certain person asked Yilma to be his God father (its equivalent meaning in Amharic is 'breast father'). Yilma humbly replied that he had no breast and recommended him to plead Mäkonin Dänäqä to be his 'breast father' as he was relatively a plump man.

Political Humor Seven

When the plotters of the coup planned to arrest most of imperial family and important government officials, it was told that they gave telephone calls to government officials to come to the palace so as to visit Empress Mänän whose leg was said to be broken. Suspecting that something dangerous was going on at the palace, the story goes on, the witty Yilma declined to arrive there telling to the coup makers that he was merely economist, not a bonesetter.

Political Humor Eight

During the coup of 1960, the plotters had taken control of all roads from and to Addis Ababa. At the stations, soldiers were examining the identification of all travelers from and to Addis Ababa. Yilma came from Ġimma and arrived at Säbäta town. For fear of being identified if he drove his Land Rover, he got on a bus which was transporting mentally ill individuals to St. Emmanuel Hospital. On their way to the city, soldiers stopped the bus and asked the identity of the travelers one by one. Yilma told them that his name is Yilma Déréssa-the famous Minister of Finance. The soldiers, laughing at the 'patient', let Yilma come in saying that the patient was too ill to recognize even his name.

Political Humor Nine

From 1958 to 1960, Yilma was a Minister of Foreign Affairs and he had a habit of arriving at his bureau (now the National Museum) every morning before office hour. One morning during the rainy season, as usual, he came to office early. An hour or two later, a young civil servant arrived very lately and Yilma asked him why he did so. The young man said that he was late because of the rain. "If that is the case," Yilma advised the late comer "why wouldn't you come later in the sunny season?"

Political Humor Ten

When the Provisional Military Administrative Council (Därg) sent a number of soldiers to arrest Yilma Déréssa, he did not understand why such number of military force was deployed to arrest a single individual and said: "this is an indication of ignorance about Ethiopian economy."

Political Humor Eleven

Since June 1974, the Provisional Military Administrative Council (Därg) arrested almost all significant government officials of the Imperial government and jailed them all at the grand palace. One of the detainees was Bīlatén géta Mahtämä Sīllasé Wäldä Mäsqäl. Later on, his son Sayfu was imprisoned at the same place. After a while, the Derg threw Gatačäw, another son of Mahtämä Sīllasé into the same prison. Yīlma then asked Mahtämä Sīllasé “when would Mrs. Mahtämä Sīllasé come to the prison?”

As a genre of oral tradition, slight variations in their form might characterize these political humors. Obviously, one of the striking characteristics of oral as distinct from written literature is its verbal variability. What might be called the “same poem or prose piece tends to be variable to such an extent that one has to take some account at least of the original contribution of the artist who is actualizing it—and not simply in terms of the technique of delivery.”¹³²⁰ As to the contents of these jokes, however, no significant variability occurred.

The major themes of these political jokes offer a glimpse at the representations of Yīlma, other contemporary statesmen and aspects of politics within the Ethiopian government. Before giving commentaries on the explicit messages and the implying meanings of these stories, however, it is pertinent to give a brief remark on the very style of language in which the humors have been told and retold. Oral sources confirm that all of the humors have been narrated in Amharic with perceptible *Afaan* Oromo accent assuming that Yīlma is an Oromo. Unlike the portrayal of Yīlma in these jokes, however, he was actually a good speaker of Amharic since his early school

¹³²⁰ Ruth Fennigan, 10.

days at Çutaa.¹³²¹ But, to make the jokes political and enjoyable, if not credible, narrators seem to have employed the technique of invented impersonation both in accent and composure.

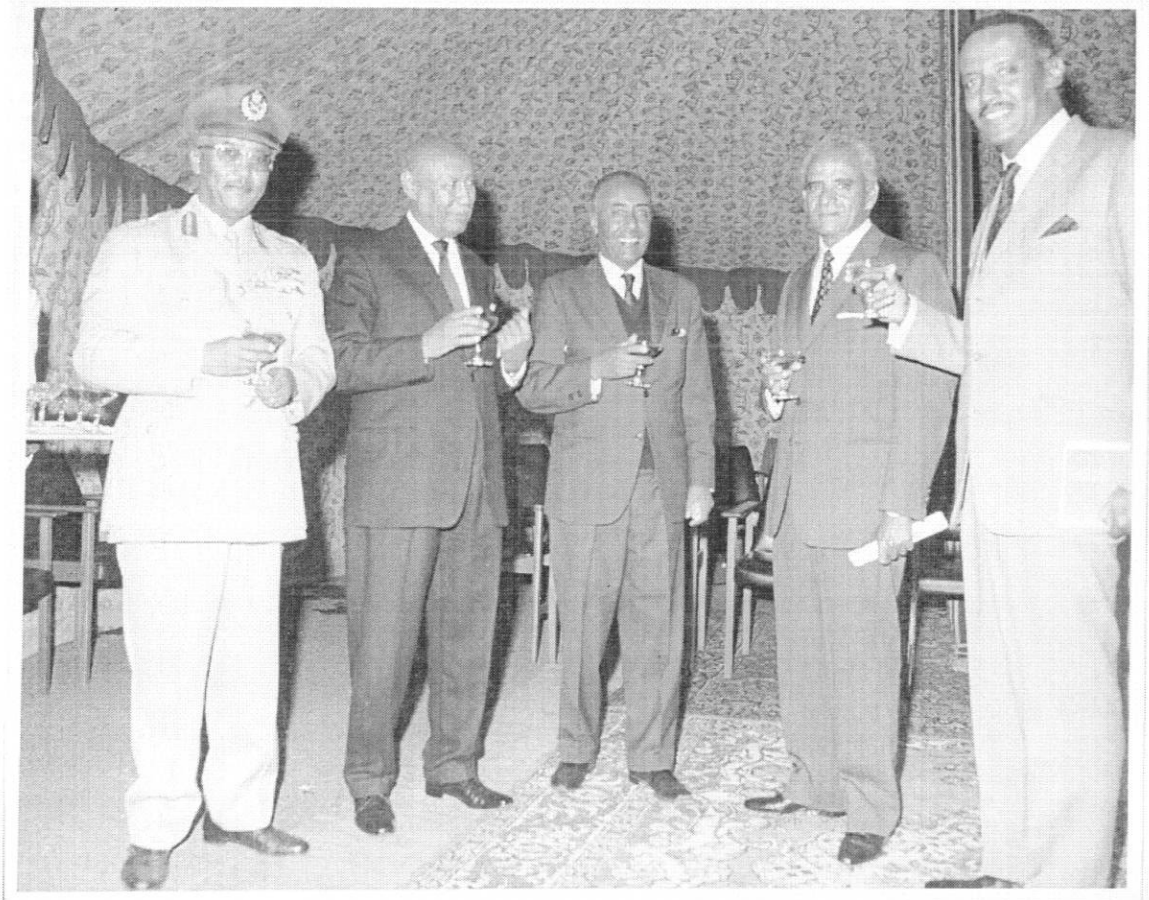


Figure 9: The Witty Yılma with colleagues (Left to right: Lieutenant General Kābādā Gēbre, Minister of Defense, *Şāhafī Tī'izaz* Tāfāraworq Akalā-wold, Minister of the Court, Yılma Déréssa, Minister of Commerce and Industry, *Şhafī Tī'izaz* Aklilu Habā-Wäld, Prime Minister, *Līg* İndalkaçāw Mākonnīn,

¹³²¹ Informant: Tāklé Roro, Asfaw Damtē.

Minister of Post & Telegraph. Addis Abeba, 1971. Note: Celebratory cocktail after the opening of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry exhibition)¹³²²

Besides the Oromo accent, the representations of Yilma in the humors as an Oromo individual constitute diverse, at times, contrasting imageries. These portrayals can be figured out mostly in their proper context. Indeed, political humor exhibits explicit coherent links to political discourse: with-out contextual knowledge on political issues, it cannot be processed and interpreted.¹³²³ By and large, the imageries of ethnic groups and speech communities “in the Ethiopian folktales have reflected more the stereotypes of the different ethnic groups already existing in Ethiopia: trickery and cleverness among Amhara; fighting, courage and strength among Afar; comedy and nonsense among “easy-going” Oromo; hard work and the pursuit of wealth among the Gurage.”¹³²⁴ In this regard, Yilma became an object of ridicule and amusement in the “Political Humor Five” and “Political Humor Six”, and his representation as a naïve and easygoing Oromo support the above argument.¹³²⁵

Beyond the imageries of Yilma, for instance, the message of the “political humor 5” criticized explicitly Yilma of nepotism in the recruitment of personnel at the Ministry of Finance. No available source at my disposal, however, proves this joke right. Oral informants unanimously argue that Yilma had never compromised professionalism in his career. But, it can be argued that the joke elucidates the surfacing, if not prevalence, of ethnic discourse in the government bureaucracy.

¹³²² In Sofya Yilma’s possession.

¹³²³ Popa and Villy Tsakona, 5.

¹³²⁴ Russell Davis– Brent Ashabraner, *The Lion’s Whiskers* (Boston, 1959), 31, 76, 92 and 127; Reidulf K. Molvaer, “Folktales in Amharic” in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 2 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005) 556b.

¹³²⁵ Bulča, offended by this representation of Yilma, noted that the joke was crude because Yilma knew that Kassa isn’t originally an Oromo name. See *My Life My...*, 68.

In direct contrast to the above mentioned humors that made Yilma an object of ridicule and amusement, the remaining jokes represented Yilma as an astute and quick witted individual. In “political humor one”, for instance, Yilma was represented as a subtle critic of the system of royal authorization of public expenditure. Interestingly, Yilma had actually been fed up of the *mazäza* system in the 1960s.¹³²⁶ We found also how the Ethiopian economy and the financial system had been a complex and challenging undertakings in the ‘Political Humor Three’ and ‘Political Humor Four’. In rejecting the contributions and expertise of statesmen such as Haddis and Mammo, the jokes portrayed Yilma somehow as an arrogant economist.

Yilma was also portrayed as a cynic and a shrewd statesman in the case of the jokes about the 1960 coup. These jokes mainly give explanations how Yilma escaped from the massacre by the plotters. Still, they seem to have also an implied meaning that the plotters, being the target of mockery, were depicted as people who weren’t really wise enough to make a successful coup. Yilma’s high regard for punctuality and precision in his real life seems to have presented probably in “Political Humor Nine”. Here, his insightful humor made a clear disparity between excuse and reason. In the last two political jokes, the deployment of excess military force to seize a civilian statesman and the arrest of the majority of a family appear to have made the military government an object of ridicule. As Yilma was a renowned economist, in the ‘Political humor Ten’, the Därg was criticized only from economic point of view. The final political joke seems to have an element of tragic satire. In fact, living with three prisoners from a family in the grand palace was a sad experience. Teasing on the idea of expecting the fourth family member seems to be a worst one. Conversely, prisoners themselves attempted to make fun out of it.¹³²⁷

¹³²⁶ Informant: Buläa Dämäqsa

¹³²⁷ Informant: Täšomä Gäbrä Mariam.

To sum up, “a political humor brings to the surface the inconsistencies and inadequacy of political decisions and acts, and the incompetence, recklessness, and corruption of politicians and political leaders.”¹³²⁸ Viewed from this point, the jokes ascribed to Yilma aren’t just comic stories. Though formulated and circulated in a relatively limited urban social group within the civil and military personnel at offices, embassy cocktails, and other social gatherings, the political jokes revealed ironically the weaknesses and the flaws of statesmen in the Imperial Government and the political system itself.

8.3. The Private Life and the Last years of Yilma Déréssa

No doubt that the Italian invasion in general and Yilma’s incarceration in particular disturbed not only the public¹³²⁹ but also his personal life. Discussed earlier, in a family-arranged marriage, Yilma got married to *Wäyzäro* Qidist Täsäma, a woman who belonged to the Moğga family, a well-known Šäwan elite group.¹³³⁰ She was a cousin of Tedla Haile whose work on Oromo-Amhara relationship Yilma consulted for his history book in Amharic. Yilma and Qidist had already a daughter, Šädalä Mariam, before the invasion. When Yilma was released after three years imprisonment at the island of Ponza, Italy, he served the Fascists in the *Ufficio Politico*.

¹³²⁸ Popa and Villy Tsakona, 6.

¹³²⁹ Sofiya Yilma is offended as Mäsfīn Wäldä Mariam (Professor) included Yilma Déréssa in his list of collaborators (*banda*) during the Italian occupation. She argues that her father worked for Fascists under duress. See *Mäksäif İndä İtiyopya Tarik*, (Addis Ababa:2005 E.C.),18.

¹³³⁰ A commendable study on the political marriages in the 19th and 20th century Ethiopia has been conducted by Heran Sereke-Brhan(2002). Among the members of the Moğa family, *Däğazmač* Gärmamé Wäldä Hawaryat was a renowned military commander, provincial governor and royal counselor in the 19th century. During the famine of 1889-92, *Däğazmač* Germame’s interest in the possession of land and the accumulation of grain had earned him a respectable reputation as a provider of food for the army. Heran noted that the *Däğazmač* was well situated in the political structure further augmenting his influence through marriage ties between his descendants and those of Sahlä Sillassé’s. See Heran Sereke-Brhan, 118-120; Bairu Tafla, “Gärmame Wäldä Hawaryat” in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 2 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 708a.

By then, his wife W/ro Qidist and his daughter came back from Çutta to Addis Ababa and the couple began to live together. However, their marriage relationship didn't last long.¹³³¹

In September 1940, Yilma married Elisabeth, a daughter of Dr. Charles Martin, alias *Hakim Wärqinäh*. Unlike the previous experience, this marriage seems to have been a result of Yilma's individual wish and desire.¹³³² "Born in 1917 in Burma, Elisabeth left school while young and married Tädla Haile in 1933."¹³³³ At the eve of the Italian invasion she was in Asmara with her husband where he was Consul.¹³³⁴ With the outbreak of the war in October 1935, "Tedla crossed the Merab and fought under *Ras Seyoum Mengesha*, the Tегrean prince; he died during the war."¹³³⁵ An informant recalls that, after the death of her husband, Elisabeth was taken care of by the family of *Ras Siyum Mängäša* in Tigray.¹³³⁶ Elisabeth arrived at Addis Ababa most probably before the seizure of the city by the Italians in May 1936 as sources indicate that her mother and her sisters took refuge from the violence at Addis Ababa in the British Legation for a short period of time. A tense life under Italian occupation continued for several months. The situation in Addis Ababa became much hazardous to the family especially after the attempted assassination of Marshal Graziani in February 1937. During those chaotic and catastrophic days for inhabitants of Addis Ababa, "the whole family was rounded up by the Italians, and Benyam and Yosef were killed. The Italians sent all the family, including Elisabeth, into detention camps

¹³³¹ Informants: Bırhanä Déréssa and Bulča Dämäqsa

¹³³² Brief biographical account from Yilma Déréssa to the Editor of the Institute for Research in Biography, Not Dated, 1945, Personal File, HO, MOFED).

¹³³³ Garretson, *A Victorian Gentleman...*, 252 and 254.

¹³³⁴ Pankhurst, "Tedla Hailé, and94 .

¹³³⁵ Bahru, *Pioneers of Change...*, 84-85.

¹³³⁶ Informant: Mängäša Siyum.

in Italy. Sometime in early 1939 after three years in the concentration camps, the family was released to return to Addis Ababa.”¹³³⁷

Oral sources are silent about Yılma’s divorce from *Wäyzäro Qidist*.¹³³⁸ Given the culture that discourages any publicity of one’s private life, the reluctance of family members to uncover data might be understandable. However, not to forget the friendship of *Bilatta Déréssa* and *Hakim Wärqñäh*, the available sources indicate that Yılma Déréssa was well acquainted with the family of Elisabeth especially since his college days in England. He went to university with her brothers, Yosef and Benyam in the late 1920s and early 30s in London. They were all studying in England and on weekends they visited Elisabeth and her sisters at their boarding school.¹³³⁹

When Yılma married to Elisabeth in September 1940, he took his daughter Şādalā with him. During his second wedding ceremony, one of his best men was Tāsfayé Qāğāla, an educated private businessman in Addis Ababa. Despite the disparity between their very careers, they could establish lasting friendship.¹³⁴⁰ Until Ethiopia was liberated from Italian occupation in 1941, Yılma and Elisabeth lived in a small house around Märkato probably because of the racial policy of the Italians. After liberation, however, Yılma was given an unfinished Italian Villa in Kazanchis, at the very spot where the Headquarters of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa is now located.¹³⁴¹

Meanwhile, arguing that he had no *rīst* in Addis Ababa on which he would be settled and would host his guests, Yılma requested the Emperor for a grant of land at the outskirt of Addis Ababa. He informed the Emperor that there was a *gaša* of arable land with few houses that the Italians

¹³³⁷ Garretson, *A Victorian Gentleman...*, 254.

¹³³⁸ Family members are not comfortable with some issues in the private life of Yılma Déréssa.

¹³³⁹ Informant: Hannah Yılma

¹³⁴⁰ Informant: Bulēa Dāmāqsa

¹³⁴¹ Informants: Bīrhanā Déréssa and Sofya Yılma.

had purchased previously for 35 thousand lire from the heirs of *Afä Nigus* İstifanos.¹³⁴² Despite an appeal from the heirs of *Afä Nigus* İstifanos to provincial authorities, Yılma was granted the land in *Mäkanisa* and began to establish a dairy farm soon after.¹³⁴³ The Furi land wasn't the only land grant that Yılma received from the Emperor. In 1951 too, as per the request of Yılma Déréssa, the Emperor granted him four gaša discontinuous land in Limu wäräda, Käfa province.¹³⁴⁴ Most often, it was Elisabeth who used to handle the private business at Limu even staying at the very farm land for some time.¹³⁴⁵ Yılma began government service earning 300, 400, 500, and 600 MTD as a salary for the month August, September, October and November 1941, respectively. As of December 1941 until May 1943, he received 600 Maria Theresa Dollars. Since then until August 1945, his salary increased to MTD 800. From September 1945 to June 1948, he earned a monthly salary of Eth\$ 1,000. For more than two and half decades, from July 1948 until the time of his arrest in June 1974, he constantly received Eth\$ 1,500 excluding some allowances.¹³⁴⁶

Having completed and refined the building at Kazanchis (Case Incis), without delay, Yılma and Elisabeth moved from Märkato to their new residence. At home, the couples most often spoke English, as Elisabeth wasn't a fluent Amharic speaker. The happiness they experienced in receiving a first child didn't last long. Yohannes, the baby boy of about one year old, accidentally died in a bathroom in August 1942.¹³⁴⁷

¹³⁴² Yılma Déréssa to Emperor Haile Sillasse, 24th August 1941, Personal File, HO, MOFED.

¹³⁴³ Heirs of *afä nīgus* İstifanos to the Governor of Addis Ababa sub-Province, 25th April 1942, Personal File, HO, MOFED.

¹³⁴⁴ Gäbrä Wäld Ingīda-Wärq to Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Finance, 26th April 1951, Personal File, HO, MOFED

¹³⁴⁵ Informant: Sofya Yılma

¹³⁴⁶ The Ministry of Pen to the Ministry of Finance, 25th June 1942, Folder No.A 2624, TGB,MOFED; *Bäğīrond* Gāzahīn Gäbrä Mariam to Administrative Department, 12 November, 1974, Personal File, HO,MOFED.

¹³⁴⁷ A Physician at the Menelik II Memorial Hospital to Yılma Déréssa, 6th August, 1942, Personal File, HO, MOFED;Informant: Sofya Yılma

Elisabeth is said to have wished to forget this tragic moment in a sense that she never showed to her children the infant's picture taken at the time when he was christened. Few months after the death of the baby, Elisabeth gave birth to Sofya in October 1942. Exactly one year later, Hannah was born. Four years have passed before Elisabeth gave birth to their second boy, and the baby was given the name Beniam, probably in memory of her murdered brother, Beniam Wärqīnäh. Fanuel is two years younger than Beniam and was born most probably in 1949. Sälomé, the last child of Yīlma and Elisabeth was born after about two years.¹³⁴⁸ Almost all children were born in the Kazanchis house next to which the home of Yīlma's eldest sister Yāšimābet and her family was located.¹³⁴⁹ Šādalā was sent to England to attend her primary education at a boarding school and it was in August 1953 that she rejoined the family when they were traveling to the United States via Europe.¹³⁵⁰

Yīlma and Elisabeth created a garden, bred horses and established a dairy farm in their compound the size of which was estimated about 7,663 square meters.¹³⁵¹ Especially Yīlma was an enthusiastic gardener for which he is said to have won awards. Documents at the Wäldä Mäsqāl Archive reveal that the engineers of the Municipality offered Eth \$ 2,590 as reparation for the loss of Yīlma's garden when the Ethiopian government cleared the site for the building of the Headquarter of UNECA. Experts of the municipality priced the edifice at Eth \$ 77,082. Meanwhile, the Addis Ababa municipality displaced approximately 40 households from the locality.¹³⁵²

¹³⁴⁸ Informant: Sofya Yīlma

¹³⁴⁹ Informant: Bīrhane Déréssa

¹³⁵⁰ Informant: Sofya Yīlma

¹³⁵¹ A Report by Civil Engineer, 21st June 1971, File No. 318, Folder No. 170, Government Property, Wäldä Mäsqāl Tariku Memorial Archive Center, IES, AAU.

¹³⁵² Gīrma Asnaqā to Asfaw Mīnalāšāwa, 19th June 1971, File No. 318, Folder No. 170, Government Property, Wäldä Mäsqāl Memorial Archive Center, IES, AAU.



Figure 10: Yılma with his Family(Back row: Hannah, Binyam, Sofya and Sälomé Yılma; front row: *Wzo.* Elizabeth Worqñäh, Yılma Déréssa. Missing: *Wzo.* Şädalä and Fanuel Yılma. Mid 1960s, National Photo Studio, Addis Ababa.)¹³⁵³

Except for five years from 1953 to 1958 when Yılma and his family lived in Washington, the whole family resided in this house. Though the Villa around the Old Air Port (today's the Embassy of Niger) to which Yılma's family transferred in 1960s was designed by Arturo Mezzedimi, the great Italian architect, Elisabeth seemed to have been too nostalgic about the

¹³⁵³ In Sofya Yılma's Possession.

Kazanchis residence to appreciate the new villa.¹³⁵⁴ Arturo Mezzedimi , according to Shimelis Bónsa(2011), was “a class of his own because of his special relationship with the emperor and his rise, if unintended, as a 'royal architect' par excellence - the master builder of the emperor's city- in the tradition of what Alfred Ilg was for Menelik in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.”¹³⁵⁵ When the Ethiopian government decided to prepare a land for the building of UNECA, ironically, it was her husband Yílma Déréssa who signed the agreement on the Ethiopian side to open UNECA Headquarter in Addis Ababa with Philippe de Seynes, Vice Secretary of United Nations Economic and Social Affairs, in June 1958.¹³⁵⁶

Yílma’s home had many visitors of diverse age groups and nationalities. He often invited foreign visitors to his home and usually invited members of his extended family to meet them. He went to great extent to impress foreigners that Ethiopians were in no way inferior to the inhabitants of developed countries. “If an American would criticize, Gabriel Tewodros recalls, the state of the roads in Addis Ababa, Yilma with a twinkle in his eye would talk about New York. If they commented on the clothing of the poor people, he would give them a lecture on the state of the poor in the Southern States in the USA.”¹³⁵⁷ Oral information also reveals that Yílma always questioned some of the established economic parameters of development of a country such as Per Capita Income (PCI).¹³⁵⁸

¹³⁵⁴ Informant: Sofya Yílma

¹³⁵⁵ Arturo Mezzedimi built many of villas for prominent members of the political and business establishment: Vila Asrata Kassa, Vila Yilma Deressa, Vila Tirunah Zarihun, Vila A. Defaye, Vila Becurasiyon, Vila Naga Masfin, Vila A. Guedema, Vila Alamayahu, Country Vila Asrtaa Kassa, and House Girma Sebbat. Some of the houses and vilas were also built in the resort-rich provinces like Bahir Dar (Tana Palace) and Nazreth (Vila Melkassa). The architect was given a fitting recognition, as the Knight Officer of the Star of Ethiopia and Officer of the Order of Menelik II. See Shimelis, 551 and 609.

¹³⁵⁶ *Addis Zāmān*: Sāné 14, 1950 E.C..

¹³⁵⁷ Gabriel Tewodros, “Recollections about Lidj Yilma Deressa”, in Sophia Yilma’s Possession.

¹³⁵⁸ Informants: Bātru Admassé and Bīrhanā Déréssa

Yilma most often had his lunch with his father *Bilatta* Déréssa and other members of the family discussing Ethiopian history and government politics. In a later period, *Bilatta* Déréssa used to come all the way from Bišoŋtu (Däbrä Zäyt) to visit his son frequently. His mother, Çaltu Sonto also had come from Näqämté to Addis Ababa to see him. Living in his neighborhood (at the locality of present day Hilton International Hotel), Yäšimäbet Déréssa often treated him to his favorite Oromo traditional food-*ançotee*, *çuko* and *bunä qällaa*.¹³⁵⁹

In many ways, Yilma was different from his colleagues, the ministers who were his contemporaries. For instance, Bulcha recalls that Yilma “rarely went to funeral ceremonies or weddings of people he did not know well. Going to the residence of important personalities on holidays to say ‘happy holiday’ was a very important social practice in Addis Ababa. Yilma never practiced that. Neither did Yilma expect younger government officials.”¹³⁶⁰

¹³⁵⁹ Informant: Sofya Yilma

¹³⁶⁰ Bulcha, *My Life My...* 82.



Figure 11: *Villa Yilma Déréssa*, built by Arturo Mezzedimi in 1960s(After confiscation in July 1975, the *Villa* is serving as the Embassy of Niger)¹³⁶¹

Bulča Dämäqsa, Mīnassé Lāmma and Gétahun Tāsāma, and close family members, for instance, Elisabeth's brother-in-laws were intimate friends of Yilma and they met regularly at his home. Yilma had a special interest to chat with young educated government officials drinking his favorite whisky-Johny Walker. However, the Ethiopian wine was his source of pride. Though Yilma was intimidating posing queries of policy and academic nature, some of the educated young Ethiopians used to visit him regularly. Oral informants recall few occasions that Yilma spent the better part of the night discussing diverse national and international issues with his

¹³⁶¹ In Sofya Yilma's Possession

juniors even to the disappointments of his wife. Once when wWro Elisabeth asked him to go to their home, he reminded his wife his favorite Amharic song: “*almäṭam qärähuñ*” (trans. “I won’t come, I stayed there”).¹³⁶² This music was sung by Fiqré Ayäla and said to be popular during the Italian occupation supposedly because of its implied critical message that targeted the Emperor choice of exiled life.¹³⁶³ Throughout the 1940s and 1960s, Yılma attended numerous lunch and dinner parties with his wife at individual homes and embassies in Addis Ababa. In this regard, he is remembered by junior technocrats for his entertaining and informative conversations. He spent considerable time with them to debate, discuss and lecture. Oral informants claimed that “his hope was in their very existence.”¹³⁶⁴

Liberal that Yılma was to his children, he never imposed his desire on their choice of career and way of life. He loved spending weekends at his residence in Adama (Nazrét) working in his small fruit farm in the compound. He was always happy whenever he saw, for instance, rural folk wearing dresses manufactured in Ethiopia. Similarly, he sometimes got sad observing Ethiopia was lagging far behind other nations in economic development. In those circumstances, he couldn’t hide his feelings from family members. Obviously, Yılma and Elisabeth discussed everything openly, whether it was family issues or politics. He never talked to his children in detail about government business.¹³⁶⁵

Yılma “believed change needed to happen [in Ethiopia] before circumstances forced change and he often predicted what actually came to take place that a ‘50 Aläqa’[a sergeant] would take over

¹³⁶² Informant: Sofya Yılma and Täšomä Gäbrämarıam

¹³⁶³ Informant: Särşä Firé Sıbhat

¹³⁶⁴ Informants: Hanna Yılma, Bätü Admasé, Ayalew Mandäfro, Bäqälä İndäşaw, Asäfa Mängäşa and Täšomä Gäbrä-Marıam.

¹³⁶⁵ Informant: Sofya Yılma

and turn the clock back on development.”¹³⁶⁶ What made him happy was witnessing the surge in the number of educated Ethiopians that he hoped would have the opportunity to move the country forward, in business, government, education.¹³⁶⁷

Since 1971 Yīlma took his time to look after especially his personal businesses in Addis Ababa and its vicinity. With the upsurge of the February Revolution in 1974, the Emperor took some reformist measures such as dismissing Aklilu Habtä-Wäld’s cabinet and forming another under the premiership of Īndalkačāw Mākonnīn as well as planning to revise the country’s constitution. Thus, in the course of this upheaval, Yīlma was assigned to sit on the constitution drafting commission under the chairmanship of Tāklā-Şadiq Mākuria. The latter recommended repetitively Yīlma or Abābā Reta to take his position as they were well experienced senior statesmen. However, the emperor, Bālačāw Asrat, the Minister of Justice and some younger members of the drafting commission did not want to see Yīlma chairing the committee or playing a crucial role in it. The commission was divided into five sub-committees and Yīlma chaired a sub-committee of ten members that drafted articles on people’s representatives until his arrest on 29th June, 1974.¹³⁶⁸

The rich literature on the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution has already chronicled, discussed and analyzed how the spontaneous opposition against the Imperial Government in urban centers created conducive circumstance for the organized military group to assume the state power.¹³⁶⁹

¹³⁶⁶ Informant: Hanna Yīlma

¹³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶⁸ Tāklā Şadiq, *Yä 'hīywāt Tariké*, 256,259,262 and 266.

¹³⁶⁹ The Ethiopian Revolution is, in relative terms, perhaps one of the historical topics that have been studied most. One can find dozens of monographs and articles in different languages on it. Not all writings are the works of scholars. Quite a number of the literature is journalistic in nature and is deficient in analysis. The following works are commonly mentioned by the academia. Addis Hiwot(1975); Andargačāw Asāgid,(1992 E.C.); Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution 1974-1987: A Transformation from an aristocratic to a totalitarian autocracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Dawit Wolde Giorgis, *Red Tears: War, Famine and Revolution in Ethiopia* (Trenton New Jersey: Red Sea Press, 1989); Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux,

Suffice it here to note briefly that in the course of the upheaval, diverse social and occupational groups challenged the imperial government raising different political and economic questions through demonstrations, strikes and arrests. The imperial government seems to have been in the state of dilemma as it mainly implemented a policy of appeasement which never satisfied protesters. Eventually, a relatively well organized committee of armed forces assumed state power beginning from June 1974. As the Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces, the Imperial Bodyguard, the Police and Territorial Army was formed on 28th June, 1974, it began arresting immediately higher officials of the Imperial Government. Yīlma Déréssa was among the first few statesmen to be arrested on 29th June, 1974.¹³⁷⁰ One of his daughters narrates:

The Army arrived in a huge truck with several soldiers who surrounded the house. My parents were sitting in the living room by themselves talking after dinner. The army having surrounded the house they rushed up the stairs towards the front door. Hearing a knock, I believe it was the lady who served my parents dinner who opened the door to find armed men asking for my father. He walked into the corridor and asked them what they wanted; they asked him to come with them. My father and I had talked about his eminent arrest early that morning and he had told me that he was expecting them that evening; I don't know how he knew. He asked them to wait, went into the bedroom, bid my mother goodbye and retrieved his jacket and scarf. I arrived just as the truck was leaving with him sitting in front with the driver. I followed the truck to "Aratenga", and turned back to my parents' home to tell my mother where they had taken him.¹³⁷¹

Indeed, Yīlma was not the only person who foresaw the ascendance of the military power in Ethiopia. Ras Asratā Kasa also predicted that a military government in country “wouldn’t merely

The Ethiopian Revolution (London: Verso Editions, 1981); Edmond Keller, *Revolutionary Ethiopia*; Kiflu Tadesse, *The Generation: The History of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party*, 3 Vols, (New York: University Press of America, 1998); Rene Lefort, *Ethiopia: An Heretical Revolution?* (London: Zed Press, 1983); John Markakis and Nega Ayele, *Class and Revolution*; Marina Ottaway and David Ottaway, *Ethiopia: Empire in Revolution* (New York: Africana Publishing, 1978); Tefera Haile Selassie, *The Ethiopian Revolution 1974-1991: From Monarchical Autocracy to a Military Oligarchy* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1997), Tesfaye Mekonen, *Yidrās Lābalātariku* (Addis Ababa: Brana Electro Publishers, 1992) and Zenebe Felcke, *Nāhār*, (Addis Ababa: 1996 E.C.)

¹³⁷⁰ Abāra Ġāmbāre, *Yā ʾisīr hētu Abāsa hātalaqu betā-māngīst (1966-1974)*, (Addis Ababa: 1985 E.C.), 180.

¹³⁷¹ Informant: Hannah Yīlma (Interview conducted in English)

be a government that would give priority to law and order and put undesirable politicians in prison. It would try to uproot the entire elite in our country because the military will never feel entirely safe as long as the aristocracy were in circulation.”¹³⁷²

Until October 1974, Yīlma and other political prisoners were detained in the head quarter of the 4th Division. Probably due to security reasons, the Committee now known as Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) or *Därg* transferred 148 detainees to the grand palace.¹³⁷³ “They were put in wine cellar of the Palace under the Throne Hall.”¹³⁷⁴ As the wine cellar was a wide space meant for wine storage partitions were made to isolate some prisoners from others. The store was divided into two large rooms and Yīlma was detained in Room Number Two and used to sleep next to Abära Ğämbäre.¹³⁷⁵

Indeed, Yīlma was spared from the November 1974 massacre. However, as to how the decision was made to kill the “60” former government officials, two contrasting narratives have circulated. In his memoir, Major Mängistu argued that the death penalty was decided accidentally by members of the sub-*Därg* (estimated to be 600) and the proper *Därg* (120) who casted their vote emotionally on 24th November, 1974. The meeting was held initially to discuss the troubled relationship between General Aman Mikael Andom and the PMAC. Mängistu argued that the atmosphere in the hall was suddenly changed when a certain member of sub-*Därg* made a demagogic speech accusing the *Därg* of allowing political prisoners to enjoy a luxurious

¹³⁷² Del Boca, 298.

¹³⁷³ Abära, 180; Zänäbä Fäläqe, *Näbār*, (Addis Ababa: 1996 E.C.), 30

¹³⁷⁴ Seyoum, 290.

¹³⁷⁵ Abära, 186-187.

life even in the jail. Hence, members of the congregation were asked to cast their vote either for or against the death sentence of 150 prisoners. Among these, 54 were condemned to death.¹³⁷⁶

Contrary to this narrative, however, Mängistu was said to have ordered Colonel Daniel Asfaw, the Chief of the Department of Revolutionary Operation to execute 54 political prisoners one day before the aforesaid meeting was held. Hence, the voting is said to be carried out to avoid personal accountability.¹³⁷⁷ Even during this crude procedure of decision making process, oral information reveals that Yilma's name wasn't strange to many. Captain Fiḳäe Sillāsē Wägdäräs recalls:

አቶ ይልማ በገንዘብ አወጣጥ ሥርዓት ላይ ከፊውዳሎች ጋር ግብፃዊ ይገኘው እንደነበር እናውቃለን። የላቸው ሥም ሲጠራ ብዙ ውይይት አልተደረገም። ሊቀመንበሩ 'እሳቸውን እናውቃቸዋለን እሳቸው ይለፉ' ብለው ተናግረዋል። ሞት ይገባቸዋል ብሎ ያለ ሰው አላስታውስም። በአጭሩ ከፊውዳሎች ጋር የላቸው ግንኙነት ጥብቅ አይደለም። የመሬት ከበርቴ አይደለም። አንዳንዶቹ በሺ ጋሻ የሚቆጠር መሬት ይዘው በጭሰኛው ላይ ያደረሱት በደል ነው ውሳኔ ያሰጠው። እኚህ ሰውዬ ይህን የመሰለ ሁኔታ የላቸውም የሚል አመለካከት ነበር።

*We knew that Yilma was defying feudal dignitaries based on the modern practice of public expenditure. When his name was mentioned in the list for vote, there hadn't been hot debate about him. The chairperson himself said 'we knew him, let him survive'. I don't remember anyone who argued for the execution of Yilma. His relationship with the feudal system was loose. He was not landlord. The major factor for the death sentence was the subjugation that landlords imposed on tenants who were toiling in large tracts of land. It was believed that Yilma was not such kind of person.*¹³⁷⁸

¹³⁷⁶ Mängistu Hailä-Mariam, *Tiglačin Yä'Itiyopia Hizh Abyotawi Tigil*, Vol.1 (Los Angeles: Tschay Publishers, 2004 E.C.), 217-219.

¹³⁷⁷ Fäsäha Dästa, *Abyotuna Tizitayé*, (Los Angeles: Tschay Publishers, 2008 E.C.), 129-130

¹³⁷⁸ Informant: Fikre Sillāsē Wägdäräs (Captain)

Whether the decision was made personally by the chairperson prior to the meeting or collectively by the congregation, subjectivity seems to have played a crucial role in annihilation of the officials without due process of law. Authorities of the PMAC stress strongly the contribution of the tense political atmosphere that prevailed among the members of the *Därg* to their hasty decision.¹³⁷⁹ Prejudiced that they had been, their knowledge of the prisoners seems to be superficial. Indeed, some must have known Yīlma due to the political humors about him. However, in the context when sufficient sources aren't yet disclosed, it is impossible to give a full historical picture of the event about which the protagonists still, after four decades, wanted to rationalize.¹³⁸⁰

Though the political change did ruin Yīlma's and his family's life, he was said to have shown great endurance in the face of calamity. Not only Elisabeth and Sofya were imprisoned for a some months but also Tägāñ Yätäša Wärq, husband of Sofya Yīlma, was among those massacred on November 24, 1974. His closest daughter Hannah Yīlma, accompanied by Dārāgä Déréssa, a nephew of Yīlma, went into exile leaving behind her husband, Sībhat Gäbrä Īgziabhér, a popular essayist and novelist. These two exerted considerable effort in defying the *Därg* from exile.¹³⁸¹ Šadalä, Beniam, Fanuel and Sälomé had already left the country before the 1974 Revolution. His residence and all his farms were confiscated. His celebrated father *Bilatta* Déréssa died at the age of 91 on 29th September, 1977 very distressed of the country's fate. His

¹³⁷⁹ Informants: Nadāw Zākarias and Fikre Silasé Wägdäräs.

¹³⁸⁰ Gänät Ayälä, *Yä 'letänant kolonel Mängistu Hailä-Mariam Tiztawoč*, (Addis Ababa: Mega Publishing House, 1994 E.C.), 144-146; Mängistu Hailä-Mariam, 217-219; Fikrä Silasé Wägdäräs, *Īnana Abiyotu*, Los Angeles: Tsehay Publishers, 2006 E.C, Fīsāha, 129-130.

¹³⁸¹ Dārāgä Déréssa was the leader of the Ethiopian People Democratic Alliance (EPDA) and the founding member of the Ethiopian National Democratic Organization (ENDO) which was established as EPDA and *Kītāt* under the leadership of Kiflē Wadajo. When EPRDF forces overthrew the military government and organized a conference to develop charter for the transitional government in 1991, Dereje delegated Bulcha Demeqsa to attend the conference in Addis Ababa as he lay sick in bed with myeloma (bone cancer); Bulcha *My Life My...*, 152-153; Informant: Sofya Yīlma and Bulča Dāmāqäsa

mother, Çaltu also, passed away while Yılma was in prison. In those hard moments, he never trembled with fear of a bad fate that would await him and his family.¹³⁸² This is probably because the things that he anticipated years ago happened then. Or he showed great calmness due to his previous experience of total war in 1935/6 and prison life in Italy(1937-1940). Eye witness accounts reveal that no change was seen in Yılma's manner in the prison. He felt no resentment, for example, as *Ato Mīnasé Lamma* and others did. He didn't abandon even a table manner whenever meal was served. He spoke to and interacted with others as he did before.¹³⁸³

In order to soften the hard life in prison, Yılma and his colleagues were engaged in educational activities. A teaching-learning activity based on voluntary participation was begun and Yılma was said to teach *afaan* Oromo.¹³⁸⁴ At the early years of their detention political issues used to predominate discussion among prisoners. Sometimes, probably out of despair and hopelessness, few prisoners anticipated that the new military government was about to collapse very soon because of economic problem. Yılma, as a well experienced statesman and a student of renowned thinkers of politics, advised others to question this kind of conclusion. He stressed, for instance, that a government might not fall down due to economic factors. Juniors were always fascinated by his scholarly analysis and informative talk on the nature of state and different political ideologies.¹³⁸⁵

Still in prison for more than four years since June 1974, as Yılma got older and older, his health went from bad to worse in the late 1970s.¹³⁸⁶ Despite his family's appeal to the authorities for permission to provide him better medical treatment, he was denied proper medication and was

¹³⁸² Informants: Sofya Yılma, Tāšomā Gābrā Mariam and Ašānafi Šīfāraw.

¹³⁸³ Informants: Häbtä-Sillasé Tafäsä, Bättru Admasé, Nīgusé Häbtä-Wäld, Ašānafi Šīfāraw, Tāšomā Gābrā Mariam

¹³⁸⁴ Abāra, 68

¹³⁸⁵ Informants: Bättru Admasé and Princee Bā'idā Mariam Mākonin

¹³⁸⁶ Informant: Häbtä Sillasé Tafäsä

left with plain treatment in the grand palace. Though he was said to suffer from acute stomach cancer, he showed great endurance in the face of pain. Knowing that the medication at the palace health center didn't relieve Yilma from his condition, an authority in charge of political prisoners sent him to the Hospital of the former Imperial Bodyguard at the beginning of January 1979. The PMAC assigned an armed soldier to watch over Yilma at his death bed. His deteriorating health condition continued to be worse and within a week of his admission to the hospital he passed away on 21st January, 1979. He was buried in the cemetery of Yäka St. Mikael Church.¹³⁸⁷

To summarise, this chapter has examined critically the life of Yilma Déréssa beyond official government responsibilities and the following subject matters are dealt with: literature, folktale, and the private life of a study subject. Yilma's identity as an Oromo statesman seems to have come somewhat at the forefront in the discussions of the first two sections. The assessments made on these issues show that both the real and legendary Yilma was situated amidst the tension and contradiction of the political system. As the chapter has attempted to reconstruct the private life and the last days of the subject of study, it has identified that Yilma had lived and died as a modern state functionary. Interestingly, the shifts of his residential areas first from *Märkato* to Kazanchis and later to the vicinity of the Old Air Port give a glimpse at the general history of Addis Ababa itself since Italian period.¹³⁸⁸ The palace being the working place and the prison site for Yilma and many of his colleagues in the imperial government; it finally consumed Yilma's life.

¹³⁸⁷ Report of Addis Ababa *Awraṣa* Court, Dated 14th May, 1978, File No.1/1-y, Personal File of Yilma Déréssa, MOFA

¹³⁸⁸ What the history of the production of spaces in Addis Ababa demonstrates, Shimelis explains, is that "the spatial and social hierarchy of places in the city was never stable. New areas always emerged; old neighborhoods retained or enhanced their social importance or declined. This was in part an illustration of the dynamism as well as the classicism rooted in the urbanization of the capital. In the late 1950s and 1960s, for instance, areas included within the third concentric circle evolved from being the backwaters of the city to its most modernizing and developing territories. A microcosm of this process was the changing nuclei of Addis Ababa in a generally north-west-south direction, eventually expanding further to the southeast and southwest." Shimelis, 283-84

Conclusions

In an attempt to reconstruct a political biography of Yīlma Déréssa, this study needed to scan broader themes. It has first tried to appraise the general trend of life-writing at different levels. Within this frame, the thesis has examined the close relation between biographical trajectory and historical context. This is followed by a discussion on an aspect of center-periphery relations between a particular Wälläga aristocratic family and the ruling elites who exercised political power from Addis Ababa-the emerging political center of 20th century Ethiopia. Yīlma Déréssa and his forefathers had adjusted themselves to the new political system and social formation and, more importantly, reinforced it across generations. Lastly, the dissertation has dealt with the intricate subject matter of social identity by mainly presenting the historical trajectories of a pivotal Oromo historical figure and statesman during the post-Italian occupation period of the Imperial Government. Centered at the intersection of all these subject matters, Yīlma's "individuality" has interconnected them as a thread.

The study particularly covered the life of Yīlma Déréssa in the period between 1907 and 1979. As noted earlier, this period saw remarkable changes in many aspects of state and society. Given the changes that the Ethiopian state and societies experienced in the period under discussion, the path that biographical studies in Ethiopia have followed along with the transformation can be comparable with the global trend. Though life writing is an age-old practice in many parts of the world including Ethiopia, the theme of biographical works has changed, as discussed earlier, since life writing has been dominated by the life of individuals who were products and agents of social change, of urban and imperial life: in short, of modernity. A glance at the biographical works that have been overviewed in this study illustrates that a more or less similar development had been occurring in Ethiopia. These biographical studies, unlike the theme in century's old

tradition of biographical literature in the country, revolved around personalities who are believed to be historical agents in the modern state since the second half of 19th century. This might be attributed partly to the methodological problem. A political biography of Yilma Déréssa, like the works surveyed, can be taken as a particular example of this shift of theme in biography.

However, the argument forwarded in the introduction that the modern biography is above all a free-standing text, the narrative of an individual and of individuality self-contained in form as in subject needs a careful assessment, at least, in the context of the political biography of Yilma Déréssa. Indeed, the basic social unit in the modern West is the individual. This belief about the place of an individual in the west has its implication in biography. In the West, as it is pointed out in the introduction of the study, with its glorification of the individual, a biographer usually focuses on his or her subject's individuality, those aspects, attitudes, and abilities that separate the subject from the masses. The biography of a Westerner might likely consider people who play a large role in the subject's life or who help provide context and support, their presence would not likely loom so large because of the difference in "separateness" of the individual. Therefore, modern Western biographers often probe for explanations for life decisions and developments in the individual himself or herself by exploring the subject's psyche. In this regard, a political biography of Yilma Déréssa has revealed the complex relationship between Yilma's comparative "individuality" and the historical context. To attribute causal explanations in Yilma's biography chiefly to his "individuality", therefore, is to simplify the significant roles that his family (father and relatives), his social identity (being an Oromo individual) and the institutions and practices of the Ethiopian government had been playing throughout his life.

This leads us to the discussion on the historical context for a biography of Yılma Déréssa. Since the last quarter of the 19th century, Yılma's life and the fate his noble family in Wälläga was closely linked with the Ethiopian state. The life account of *Bilatta Déréssa Amänté* revealed clearly that as regional nobility he adjusted himself to new developments that some of the *Leqa Naqamtee* nobilities experienced. To reconstruct a life account of Yılma Déréssa, therefore, an attempt to provide the proper historical setting was made and the attributes, practices and institutions of an Ethiopian state and major developments associated with it since the last quarter of the 19th century have been examined.

In attempt to draw a better picture of an individual reacting to centralized state and the emergence of modern political practices in Ethiopia, in this study, relevant issues and developments have been dealt with. Before *Bilatta* abandoned Çutta which was one of the nerve-centers of the kingdom of *Leqa Naqamtee* beyond the Dedissa River, *Bilatta Déréssa* personally opened a modern school and sent his little brothers and his son, Yılma Déréssa. This had a lasting impact on the subject of the study. *Bilatta* also engaged in merchandize business emancipating his hundreds of house slaves and *gäbars* at Çutta and its environ. A careful appraisal of *Billatta Déréssa's* pieces of writings intermittently published on *Birhanina Sälam* for eight years and his official as well as unofficial social responsibilities he took on revealed clearly how *Billatta Déréssa* didn't only adjust themselves to the new political developments at Wälläga and Addis Ababa but also ha begun to strengthen it both rhetorically and practically.

The Italian invasion of Ethiopia seems to have situated Yılma Déréssa in regional political development that apparently exploited an opportune moment to rebel against the centralizing Ethiopian state, yet, paradoxically, to support it. By virtue of his social background, Yılma

appeared to have been involved in the movement that would endanger the very political and social formation he began to reinforce as a young technocrat.

In the political history of the Ethiopia state in twentieth century, the immediate aftermath of the post occupation period had marked a significant departure from the previous era particularly in terms of political and economic centralizations. Though organized three months after the official reestablishment of some ministries in May 1941, the Ministry of Finance was the vital government institution that worked tenaciously to the fulfillment of fiscal centralization in the country. Assisted greatly by Colonel Frank Stafford, Yilma had developed plans for the commencement of budgeting, ministerial bureaucracy and new currency in Ethiopia. Furthermore, he together with the British advisor engaged in the task of drafting proclamations especially on the rates and types taxation. More importantly, Yilma had played crucial role on delineating the power and responsibilities of the tax collectors of the Ministry of Finance vis-à-vis regional rulers. Cognizant of the complex condition of taxation in Ethiopia, Yilma had also made an effort to establish an efficient and fair tax system. Having considered the multiplicity of taxes which made its collection a cumbersome engagement both for the tax payers and tax collectors, he made a scholarly endeavor to downsize the kinds of taxes that the government imposed on the tax payers. He insisted that the purpose of taxation in Ethiopia would not be limited to financing the government and had to take especially economic stability into consideration.

Recruiting appropriate personnel to the Ministry of Finance is another activity in which Yilma Déréssa was closely engaged and made meaningful contribution to the development of bureaucracy in Ethiopia. Along with the staffing of functionaries to the Ministry, Yilma together with his associates suitably solved the problem of trained man power by establishing probably

the first commercial school at Menilek II School. Though not implemented in the first few years, budgeting was another important practice in Ethiopian government to which Yīlma made considerable effort. Due to the acute problem of financial resources, the Ethiopian government had relied largely on the British aid. However, Yīlma, as a prominent authority at the nascent institution, wasn't a passive spectator of British domination in public finance. In order to collect revenue for public expenditure, Yīlma facilitated the export of cereals to the Middle East and closely oversaw the revenues collected from government properties and toll stations. Importantly, he became instrumental in incorporating the Yubdo Gold mine to government property. Together with other Ethiopian and expatriate authorities, Yīlma also took part actively in the struggle to establish national bank and currency. In a nutshell, as an educated technocrat, Yīlma's individual intentionality, purposefulness, choice and creativity were reflected for the first time during his preliminary responsibilities in laying the foundations of the Ministry since 1941. These continued in more or less similar comportment throughout his public life until 1970s.

Empowered legally and politically, Yīlma had continued to play an important role in consolidating the Ministry of Finance in terms of organization and financial resources throughout 1940s. When the Ethiopian government was enlisted for the Lend-Lease policy of the United States government in 1940s, it was Yīlma Déréssa who made the opportunity as a major means of resistance to British domination in government finance and currency. In securing the US assistance, he played a leading role not only in making of Ethiopian currency and strengthening the State Bank of Ethiopia but also paved the way for recommencement and development of the Ethio-American diplomatic relations in the post-Italian occupation period. Energetic that he was, he also took over other responsibility beyond the jurisdiction of Finance and economy. Having

examined Yilma's engagement at the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts, for instance, one can conclude that he favorably inclined towards new beginnings and planning rather than running an established institution. Interestingly, no matter how zealous he was about education and relatively in good terms with the emperor, the latter denied the opportunity to Yilma. In a latter period, however, he was given a chance to take on responsibilities in the education sector that he aspired in mid 1940s as he was appointed to preside over the Board of Governors of Hailä-Sillasé I University in 1960s.

However, his considerable enthusiasm for fresh statutory and bureaucratic practices continued to be manifested in staffing the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in 1949 and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1958 with college graduates and young experts. In order to catch up the quality standard of Ethiopian agricultural produces in the international market, Yilma initiated different legislative measures. He was also one of the Ethiopian government officials who took part in loan and trade agreements with international organizations and the Netherlands. During his diplomatic services in the Ethiopian embassy in Washington DC and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Yilma attempted to safeguard Ethiopia's national interest in the dynamic regional, continental and global politics. As the 1950s saw considerable change in the third world politics especially in the Middle East and Africa, he foresaw the growing importance of independent African states in Ethiopian international politics. In a collective effort to make Ethiopia a regional and continental power, Yilma made meaningful contribution.

Back to the very ministry he established in early 1940s, Yilma, delegating considerable power to some young technocrats, is said to have created opportunities for junior experts to put into effect their knowledge and skills. With the expansion of the bureaucracy in the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, delegation of power and authority characterized Yilma's leadership style.

As a result, he attempted to make the bureaucracy effectual. Though the ministry was praised for being the 'more modern institutions in Ethiopia' and Yīlma's influence over the emperor increased considerably in the 1960s, he failed personally to manage the budget crisis more than once which possibly claimed his position in 1969. However, we have divergent views, if not facts, among oral informants on the explanation for his transfer from the key ministry in Ethiopian government as well as on his gradual expulsion from official responsibilities.

Among other subject matters in the literary works of Yīlma Déréssa and folktales about him, his social identity as an Oromo Ethiopian statesman prevailed in the discussion. The identity issue which was reflected in the appraisal of Yīlma's renowned history book and political jokes about him exposed somehow a feature of the political system. Along with the popular representation of Yīlma which have marked out mainly his "individuality" both in the literature and oral sources as "the graduate of LSE", "the economist", "the radical reformer", "the moderate", "the astute" and "the witty", his Oromo social background from Wälläga aristocratic family(*wärrä Bäkäre*) had also constituted his personality. Not to forget the overt oppositions that the imperial government faced from different social groups and individuals, there were covert tensions within the imperial government and were manifested in the public and private lives of Yīlma Déréssa as we examined it in the literature and folktales. At last, with the intensification of opposition and social uprising, the imperial government was overthrown in 1974 and the political change that followed it had disastrous effect on Yīlma Déréssa's life.

Bibliography

I. Primary Sources

A. Archival Materials

I. Ministry of Finance

A. Head Office (HO, MOFED)

Personal File of Yılma Déréssa, File Name “*Kibur Ato Yılma Déréssa*”, File No. 1

B. Šola Mägazän(ŠM, MOFED)

Folder No. A 912-956; A 2934-2957; A 3082-3136; A3137-3191; A3271-3321; A 5158-5208; A 5377-5446; A 5515-5600; A 6042-6070; A 6071-6107; B 2632-2683; C 718-749; D 1782-1843; D 2592-2630; D 4084-4185.

C. Təqlay Gimgə Bet(TGB,MOFED)

Folder No. A 628; A2623; A 2624; A-2625; A2626; A2627; A 2633; A2635; A2636; A2641; B2314; B-2315; B-2316; B 2318; B-2319; B2320; B2321; B 2322; B2327; B2331;C2378; C 2379; C2380 ; C2393; D2347; D 2350; E 2662; E2665.

II. Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Personal File, File No. 1/1-Y, File Name “Yılma Déréssa”

File No. 170, File Name *Yä’ Däbub Misraq İsiya Yägara Mäkälakäl Wıl*

III. National Archive and Library Agency

File No. 1.1.17.05; Folder No. 2.2.73.02, File No. 102; Folder No. 5.1, 1.01; Folder No. 15.08.16;

File No. 17.1.1.184.04, Folder No. 10/34; File No. 62.1.01; File No. 62.1.23.98, No, Folder No. 145; Folder No. 63.1.3.13; Folder No. 63. 1.13.07; Folder No. 63.1.49.21, File No. 461; IV.

IV. Institute of Ethiopian Studies

IES, MS, 337; IES, MS, 338; MS, IES, 339; MS, IES, 468; IES, MS 1003; IES, MS 1688; IES, MS 1733; IES MS 1734; IES, MS 2104; IES, MS 2110; MS IES 2463(A) and IES, MS 3691, G-5. IES, MS 3400; MS, IES, 3401; MS. IES. 15077.

V. Wäldä Mäsqäl Memorial Archive Center

Folder No. 170, File No. 318; Folder No. 321; Folder No. 2249; Folder No. 321, File No 1636; and Folder No. 321 File No. 1613,.

VI. British Foreign Office Documents (IES Microfilm section)

FO 371/20206; FO 371/31599; FO 371/35610; FO 371/35611; FO 371/35612.; FO 371/35614

VII. U.S. A. State Department Documents

Department of State, 884.24/112, 1/2; 884.24/107; 884.24/110; , 884.24/109; 884.24/112; 884.00/7-1443; 884.014/7-2043; 884.51/8-543; 884.24/142a; 884.51/66; 884.516/15; 884.515/34e 884.515/34d; 740.0011 European War 1939/31888; 884.51/67; , 884.24/93; 884.24/95; 884.01A/62.

<http://images.library.wisc.edu/FRUS/EFacs/1943v04/reference/frus1943v04.i0008.pdf>.

Department of State, 884.001 Selassie, Haile/2-2745,

United States Department of State / *Foreign relations of the United States : diplomatic papers, 1945. The Near East and Africa Foreign Relations, 1945, Vol VIII. Website:*
<http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=turn&entity=FRUS.FRUS1945v08.p0017&id=FRUS.FRUS1945v08&isize=M&q1=yima>

VIII. The World Bank Archives

Records Center Room HB-1, 1969-71 Box No. 106-11, World Bank Archives.(Shared by Surafel Gelgelo, Department of History, Addis Ababa Universty.)

Records Center Room HB-1, 1969-71, Box No. 292-02.

IX. Private Document Collections

Appeal from Family Members of Yilma Déréssa to the Provisional Military Administrative Council, *Tir 22, 1967*, (In Sofia Yilma's possession)

Letter from Emperor Haila Silassei to Yilma Déréssa, Dated 5th August, 1954(In Yämanä İǧigu's possession, New York).

Letter from Western Oromo Nobilities to British Consulate at Gambela (In *dağazmač* Wäldä Sämayat Gäbrä-Wäld's Possession)

List of Ethiopian Government Agencies and Enterprises over which Yilma Presided (In Yämanä İǧigu's possession, New York)

Note book of Yilma Déréssa (In Yämanä İǧigu's possession, New York).

Prison Testament of Yilma Déréssa (In Yämanä İǧigu's possession, New York).

"Recollection of Lidj Yilma Deressa", by Gabriel Tewodros, December 1997(In Sofia Yilma's possession)

Yämanä Gäbrä İǧziabhér, "Séna Wärrä Bäkäre", Manuscript (1971 E.C.), 85-88(Shared by Tesema Ta'a, Professor of History Addis Ababa Universty).

B. Periodicals and Legal Documents

I. *Birhanäna Sälam*

1st Year, No.6, 5-2-25; No. 13, 26-3-25; No. 15, 9-4-25; No. 21, 20-5-25; No. 21, 21-5-25; No. 30, 23-7-25; r, No.32, 6-8-25; No. 49, 3-12-25; 2nd Year, No. 27, 8-7-26; 2nd Year, No.50, 16-12-26; No. 51, 23-12-26; 3rd Year, No. 2, 13-1-27; No. 8, 24-2-27; No.38, 22-9-27; No. 46, 17-11-27; 4th Year, No.12, 22-3-28; No.14, 28-4-28; No. 18, 3-5-28; No. 45, 8-11-28; 5th Year, No. 20, 16-5-29; 6th Year, No. 1, 24-12-29; 7th Year, No. 17-12-31 and 8th Year No. 7 11-2-32.

II. *Addis Zämän*

(All in the Ethiopian Calender)

Säné 7 1933; *Säné* 14 1933; *Säné* 21 1933; *Säné* 27, 1934; *Nähasé* 22, 1935; *Hamlé* 2, 1941; *Hamlé* 9, 1941; *Ginbot* 5, 1942; *Mägabit* 22, 1943; *Säné* 16, 1943; *Hamlé* 7,1943; *Hamlé* 27, 1943; *Mäskäräm* 4, 1944; *Mäskäräm* 25, 1944; *Hidar* 14,1944; *Yäkatit* 29, 1944; *Mägabit* 12, 1945; *Ṭiqūmt* 28, 1946; *Miazia* 8, 1947; *Miazia* 15, 1947; *Mäskäräm* 13, 1948; *Säné* 14, 1950; *Säné* 1, 1952; *Säné* 8, 1952; *Säné* 9, 1952, *Säné* 11, 1952; *Säné* 15, 1952; *Säné* 18,1952; *Yäkatit* 2, 1953; *Säné* 8, 1953; *Tahsas* 10, 1954; *Ginbot*, 27, 1954; *Hamlé* 5, 1955; *Mäskäräm* 9, 1956 ; *Ṭiqūmt* 13, 1958; *Ṭiqūmt* 23, 1958; *Miazia* 5, 1958; *Säné* 22, 1958 and *Nähasé* 29, 1958.

III. *Negarit Gazeta*

A Proclamation to Provide for a Tax on Land No. 8 of 1942.

A Proclamation to Provide For the Establishment of the A State Bank, No. 21 of 1942.

A Proclamation to Prohibit Export of Uncleaned and Ungraded Coffee, No 121 of 1952),
 An Order to Define the Powers and Duties of Our Ministers, Order No. 1 of 1943.
 Currency and Legal Tender Proclamation, No. 76 of 1945.
 A Proclamation to establish a State Monopoly in Respect of Tobacco, Matches and Pocket
 Lighters, No 30 of 1942),
 A Proclamation to Regulate the Imposition of Duties on Goods Exported from and Imported into
 Ethiopia, No. 39, 1943.
 A Proclamation to Authorize the Expenditure for the Government Services for the Year Ending
 the 5th of September 1945,
 Legal Notice No of 105 of 1947.
 General Notice No of 108 of 1948.
 A Proclamation for the establishment of the the Development Bank of Ethiopia, No. 116 of 1951.

IV. Published Documents

The Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement of 31st January 1942, Addis Ababa, 31st of January 1942.
 The Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement of 1944.
Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939, Second Series Vol. XIV London: Her
 Majesties Stationary Office, 1976.
Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954 Volume XI, Part 1, Africa and S2.
Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Volume XI, Part 1, Africa and South Asia
 (in two parts), Document 207.

Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955–1957 Volume XVIII, Africa, Document 226.

The 1931 Constitution.

The Revised Constitution of 1955.

II. Secondary Sources

A. Books

1. Books in Amharic

Abära Ğämbäre. *Yä 'isir betu Abäsa bätalaqu betä-mängist(1966-1974)*. Addis Ababa: 1985 E.C.

Andargačäew Asägäd. *Bä' Acir Yätäqäcä Räjim Guzo:Mä'ison Bä' Itiopia Hizb Tigil Wist*.

Addis Ababa: Central Printing Press, 1992 E.C.

Dawit Gäbru. *Käntiba Gäbru Yä 'Itiyopiya Qirs*. Addis Ababa: Bole Printing House, 1985 E.C.

Déréssa Amänté. *Yä'ato Minim Laybaqanina Yä'ato Bäkantu Tarik: Läsaw Ma'irägina Nuro YäMibäqawin Yä Mi 'Yamäläkät*. Addis Ababa:1911.

Fantahun Ğngäda. *Tarikawi Mäzgäbä Säb*. Addis Ababa: 2000 E.C.

Fikrä Silasé Wägdäräs. *Ĵñana Abiyotu*. Los Angeles: Tsehay Publishers, 2006 E.C,

Fisäha Dästa. *Abyotuna Tizitayé*. Los Angeles: Tsehay Publishers, 2008 E.C.

Ğäbrä Wäld Ğngäda Wärq. *Yä 'itiyopiya Märätina Ğibir Sim*. Addis Ababa:1948 E.C.

Ğänät Ayälä. *Yä'letänant kolonel Mängistu Hailä-Mariam Tiztawoč*. Addis Ababa: Mega Publishing House, 1994 E.C.

Ğetačäw Haile. *Yä'Aba Bahrey Dirsätoč Oromowočün Kämimäläkätü Leloč Sänädoč Gara*. Collegeville: 1995 E.C.

- Hadis Alämayähu. *Tizita*. Addis Ababa: Kuraz Publishing Press, 1985 E.C.,
- Hailä-Sillassé. *Hiywätena Yä'ityopiya İrmığa, Hulätäña Mäşhaf* . Addis Ababa: Birhanina Salam Printing House, 1966 E.C.
- Hiruy Wäldä-Sillassé. *Yä'Hiywät Tarik, Bahu'ala Zämän Läminäsu Liğoč Mastawäqiya*. Addis Ababa:1915 E.C.
- İmüru Hailä Sillassé. *Kayähut Kämastawsäw*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, 2002.A.D.
- Käbädä Täsäma. *Yetarik Mastawesha*. Addis Ababa:1970.
- Mahtämä Sillassé Wäldä Mäsqäl. *Zikrä Nägär*. Addis Ababa: 1962 E.C.
- _____. *Çe Bäläw*, Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa: 1961E.C.
- Märs'e Hazän Wäldä Qirqos. *Yä'hayañaw Kiñlä Zämän Mibaça*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 1994 E.C.
- _____, *Tiztayé Silä Rasé Yämastawsäw 1891-1923*, Addis Ababa: Aster Nega Publishing House, 2000 E.C.
- Mängistu Hailä-Mariam. *Tiglaçin Yä'Itiyyopia Hizb Abyotawi Tigil* .Vol.1. Los Angeles: Tsehay Publishers, 2004 E.C.
- Olana Zoga, *Gizätinna gizot*. Addis Abäba: 1985 E.C.
- Pawlos Ñoño. *Aşé Minilik Bä'Agär Wist Yä'täşaşafu'açäw Däbdabéwoç*. Addis Ababa: Aster Nega Publishing House,2003 E.C.
- Tadäsä Méça. *Ŧiqur Anbäsa Bä Mi'irab Itiopia*. 2nd ed. Addis Ababa: 2004 E.C.
- Täklä Hawaryat Täklä Maryam. *Yä'hıywät Tarik(Otohayografi)*. Addis Abäba: Addis Ababa University, 1998 E.C.

Täklä Şadiq Mäkuria. *Aşé Tewodros İna Yä'itiopia Andinät*. Addis Ababa: Kuraz Publishing Enterprize, 1981 E.C.

_____. *Aşé Yohannes İna Yä'itiopia Andinät*. Addis Ababa: Kuraz Publishing Enterprize, 1982 E.C.

_____. *Aşé Menilik İna Yä'itiopia Andinät*. Addis Ababa: Kuras Publishing Enterprize, 1983 E.C.

_____. *Yä'Hiywät Tariké*, Addis Ababa, 2008 E.C.

Tayyé Gäbrä Mariam. *Yä'ityopiya Hizb Tarik, Baçir Qal Yäwäta*. Asmara: 1914 E.C.

Tesema Ta'a and Alessandro Truilzi. *Yä'wälläga Yutarik Sänädoç:Kä 1880woçu İskä 1920 woçu* (G.C). Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 1996 E.C.

Yä İtiyopiya Wäşat Därasiwöç, *Yadis Zämän Mäzmur Silänäşanät Kibir*, Addis Ababa: Märha Tübäb Printing House, 1933 E.C.

Yılma Déréssa. *Yä' İtiyopiya Tarik Bä'Asrasidistäñaw Kiñlä Zämän*. Addis Ababa: Bırhanına Sälam Printing House, 1959, E.C.

Yohannis Admasu. *Yofahé Niguse: Yä'Hiwotuna Yä'şuhufu Tarik*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, 2005 E.C.

Zänäbä Fäläkä. *Näbär*. Addis Ababa: 1996 E.C.

Zäwde Räta. *Täfäri Mekonin: Rägimu Yä'siltan Guzo Bä'münilik Bä'iyasuna Bä'zäwditu Zämän 1884-1922*. Addis Ababa: Central Printing House, 1998 E.C.

_____, *Yäqādamawi Haylä Sīlassé Māngist*. New Delhi: Laxi Publications Pvt. Ltd.
2012.

2. Books in English

- Addis Hiwot. *Ethiopia from Autocracy to Revolution*. London: Merlin Press, 1975.
- Almond, Gabriel and Sydney Verba. *The Civic Culture, Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Newbury Park: Sage Publication Inc., 1989.
- Aklilu Habtä-Wäld. *Aklilu Remembers, Historical Recollections from a prison cell Aklilu Habtewold Prime Minister of Ethiopia, 1961-1974*. Translated by Getachew Tedla. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2010.
- Anderson, Perry. *Lineages of the Absolutist State*. London: Verso, 1974.
- Archer, Margarith M. *Being Human: The Problem of Agency*. Edinburgh: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Ashabranner, Brent-Russell Davis. *The Lion's Whiskers*. Boston: 1959.
- Bahru Zewde. *A History of Modern Ethiopia 1855-1991*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2002.
- _____. *Pioneers of Change in Ethiopia: The Reformist Intellectuals of the Early Twentieth Century*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press. 2002.
- Balsvik, Randi Rønning. *Haile-Selasei's Students: The Intellectual and Social Background to Revolution 1952-1977*. Michigan: Michigan State University, 1985.
- Bairu Tafla, ed. *Aṣma Giyorgis and His Work History of the Gāllā and the Kingdom of Šāwā*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GMBH, 1987.

- Belainesh Michael, S. Chojnacki and Richard Pankhurst, eds. *The Dictionary of Ethiopian Biography: Vol 1 From Early Times to the End of the Zagwe Dynasty c. 1270 A.D.* Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies. 1975.
- Beloff, Max. *The Age of Absolutism*. London: Hutchinson House, 1953.
- Black, Jeremy and Donald M. Mac Raild. *Studying History*. 3rd ed. Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007.
- Bloch, Marc. *Feudal Society* Vol. I. Translated by L..A. Manyo. London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. 2004.
- Braukamper, Ulrich. *Islamic History and Culture in Southern Ethiopia, Collected Essays*. Lit Verlag Munster, 2004.
- Bulcha Demeksa. *My Life My Vision for the Oromo and Other Peoples of Ethiopia*. New Jersey: The Red Sea Press, 2013.
- Burke, Peter. *The French Historical Revolution, The Annales School, 1929-1989*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990.
- _____. *History and Social Theory*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1993.
- Callinicos, Alex. *Making History: Agency, Structure and Change in Social Theory*, 2nd ed. Lieden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2004.
- Carmikael, Tim et al., eds., *Personality and Political Culture in Modern Africa*. Boston University, 1998.
- Carr, E.H. *What is History?* New York : Penguin Books, 1961.

- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe, Post Colonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Clapham, Christopher. *Haile-Selassie's Government*. London: Longman Group Limited, 1969.
- _____. *Transformation and Continuity in Revolutionary Ethiopia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Darkwah, Kofi. *Shewa, Menilek and the Ethiopian Empire 1813-1889*. London: Heinemann, 1975.
- Del Boca, Angelo. *The Negus: The Life and Death of the Last King of Kings*. Addis Ababa: Arada Books, 2012.
- Edel, Leon. *Writing Lives: Principa Biographica*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1959.
- Emmanuel Abraham. *Reminiscences of My Life*. New Jersey: The Red Sea Press, 2011.
- Erlich, Haggai. *Ras Alula and the Scramble for Africa A Political Biography: Ethiopia and Eritrea 1875-1897*. New Jersey: The Red Sea Press. 1996.
- Farago, Ladislav. *Abyssinia on the Eve*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1935.
- Ficquet, Eloi and Wolbert G.C. Smidt ed., *The Life and Times of Lij Iyasu of Ethiopia New Insights*. Zurich: Lit Verlag GmbH & Co. KG Wien, 2014.
- Finnegan, Ruth. *Oral Literature in Africa*. Open Book Publishers, 2012.
- Garretson, Peter. *A History of Addis Ababa from its foundation in 1886 to 1910*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000.
- _____. *A Victorian Gentleman and Ethiopian Nationalist: The Life and Times of Hakim Wärkenäh, Dr. Charles Martin*. Woodbridge: James Currey, 2012.

- Gebru Tareke. *Power and Protest in Ethiopia: Peasant Rebellion in Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Gilks, Patrick. *The Dying Lion Feudalism and Modernization in Ethiopia*. London: Julian Friedmann Publishers LTD., 1975.
- Greenfield, Richard. *Ethiopia: A New Political History*. London: Pall Mall Press. 1965.
- Hamilton, Nigel. *Biography A Brief History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007.
- Harris, R.W. *Absolutism and Enlightenment*. London: Blandford Press, 1964.
- Hess, R. *Ethiopia, the Modernization of Autocracy*. Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell Univ. Pr., 1970.
- Holcomb, Bonnie K. and Sisay Ibsa. *The Invention of Ethiopia*. Trenton: The Red Sea Press, 1990.
- Howard, William Edward. *Public Administration in Ethiopia: A Study in Retrospect and Prospect*. Djakarta: J.B. Walters, 1955,
- Keller, Edmond. *Revolutionary Ethiopia: From Empire to People's Republic*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.
- LeDonne, John P. *Absolutism and Ruling Class, The Formation of the Russian Political Order 1700-1825*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Levine, Donald. *Wax and Gold Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965.
- Marcus, Harold. *The Life and Times of Menelik II Ethiopia 1844-1913*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.

_____. *Haile Sellassie I The Formative Years, 1892-1936*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.

_____. *The Politics of Empire: Ethiopia, Great Britain and the United States, 1941-1974*. New Jersey: The Red Sea Press, 1995.

Markakis, John. *Ethiopia: Anatomy of A Traditional Polity*. Oxford: Claredon Press, 1974.

Markakis, John and Nega Ayele. *Class and Revolution in Ethiopia*. New Jersey: The Red Sea Press Inc., 1986.

Marwick, Arthur. *The Nature of History*. 3rd ed. London: MacMillan Inc. 1989.

Messay Kebede. *Survival and Modernization Ethiopia's Enigmatic Present: A Philisophical Discourse*. Lawrenceville: The Red Sea Press, 1999.

_____. *Radicalism and Cultural Dislocation in Ethiopia, 1960-1974*. Rochester, USA: University of Rochester Press. 2008.

Mills, Wright. *The Sociological Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959.

Mohammed Hassen. *The Oromo of Ethiopia A History 1570-1860*. Trenton, New Jersey: The Red Sea Press, 1994

Mosley, Leonard. *Haile Sellassie, the Conquering Lion*. Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1965.

Munslow, Alun. *The Routledge Companion to Historical Studies*. New York : Taylor and Francis Group, , second edition 2006.

Pankhurst, Richard. *Economic History of Ethiopia 1800-1935*. Addis Ababa: Haile Selasse University Press, 1968,

Pankhurst, Richard and Rita Pankhurst. *Ethiopian Reminiscences Early Days*. Los Angeles: Tsehai Publishers, 2013.

Perham, Margery. *The Government of Ethiopia*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press: 1969.

Prouty, Chris. *Empress Taytu and Menilek II Ethiopia 1883-1910*. London: Ravens Educational and Development Services and The Red Sea Press. 1986

Richardson, John E. *Analyzing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Rubenson, Sven. *King of Kings Tewodros of Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa: Haile Sellassei University, 1966.

_____. *Survival of Ethiopian Independence*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 1976.

Sbacchi, Alberto. *Legacy of Bitterness, Ethiopia and Fascist Italy, 1935-1941*. New Jersey: The Red Sea Press, 1997.

Seyoum Haregot. *The Bureaucratic Empire, Serving Emperor Haile Silasse*. New Jersey: The Red Sea Press, 2013.

Sergew Hable Sellassie. *Ancient and Medieval Ethiopian History to 1270*. Addis Ababa: United Printers, 1972.

Shiferaw Bekele, ed., *An Economic History of Ethiopia, Vol. 1: The Imperial Era 1941-74*. Dakar: Codesria, 1995.

Shiferaw Bekele, Taddese Beyene, Richard Pankhurst, eds., *Kasa and Kasa: Papers on the Lives, Times and Images of Tewodros II and Yohannes IV (1855-1889)*. Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies. 1990

- Taffara Deguefé. *Minutes of An Ethiopian Century*. Addis Ababa: Shama Books, 2006.
- Talbot, David Abner . *Haile Selassie I Silver Jubilee*. The Hague: W.P.Van Stockum & Zoon, Publishers, 1955.
- Tesema Ta'a. *The Political Economy of an African Society in Transformation: The Case of Macca Oromo(Ethiopia)*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006.
- Teshale Tibebu. *The Making of Modern Ethiopia 1896-1974*. New Jersey: The Red Sea Press, 1995.
- Tosh, John. *The Pursuit of History Aims, methods and new directions in the study of modern history*, 3rd ed. Edinburgh: Pearson Education Limited,2002.
- Truilzi, Alessandro. *Salt, Gold and Legitimacy. Prelude to the History of a No-Mans Land Bela-Shangul, Wellega, Ethiopia (c.1800-1898)*.Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orienthle, 1981.
- Tsegaye Tegenu. *The Ethiopian State The Evolution of Ethiopian Absolutism: The Genesis and the Making of the Fiscal Military State,1696-1913*. Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1996.
- Vansina, Jan. *Oral Tradition as History*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.
- Vasalieve, Alexi. *History of the Byzantine Empire, 314-1453*, Vol.2. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1952.
- Vestal, Theodore M. *The Lion of Judah in the New World: Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia and the Shaping of Americans' Attitudes toward Africa*. Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011.
- Wilson, Peter H. *Absolutism in Central Europe*, London and New York: Routledge, 2000.

Yılma Déréssa. *Byzantine Empire and the Crusades*. Addis Ababa: Haile Selassie I University Press, 1965.

Zewde Gebre Sillassei. *Yohannes IV of Ethiopia: A Political Biography*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.

B. Articles and Book Chapters

Ambrosius, Lloyd E. "Introduction." In *Writing Biography Historians and Their Craft*, edited by Lloyd E. Ambrosius, vii-xiii. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2004.

Ašānafī Šifāraw, "Yä'ikonomi plan bā'itoyopīya māčēna Īndét tāğāmārä." In *Kä'dihināt wādä Līmat:-İwqätin lätiwliid Mastälaläf, Bā'foräm for sošal städīs Yä'wiyiyit mädräk lay Yä'qäräbu Šihufoč*, edited by Šiferaw Bekele, 381-411. Addis Ababa: Forum for Social Studies, 2006 E.C.

Bahru Zewde. "Economic Origins of the Absolutist State in Ethiopia (1916-1935)." reprinted In *Society, State and History: Selected Essays*, Bahru Zewde, 96-119. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, 2009.

_____. "Early Safars of Addis Ababa: Patterns of Evolution." In *Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Centenary of Addis Ababa*, edited by Ahmed Zekaria, Bahru Zewde, and Taddese Beyene, 1986.

_____. "Hayla-Sellase: From Progressive to Reactionary." In *Ethiopia in Change: Peasantry, Nationalism and Democracy*, edited by Abebe Zegeye and Siegfried Pausewang, 30-44. London: British Academic Press, 1994.

- _____. "Heruy's Ya-Heywot Tarik and Mahtama Sellase's Che Balaw: Two Perceptions of a Biographical Dictionary." reprinted In *Society, State and History: Selected Essays*, Bahru Zewde, 1-14. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, 2009.
- _____. Review of *The Ethiopian State The Evolution of Ethiopian Absolutism: The Genesis and the Making of the Fiscal Military State, 1696-1913*. by Tsegaye Tegenu. *The Journal of African History*, 40, no. 2 (1999):304-305.
- _____. "A Century of Ethiopian Historiography." *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 33, No. 2, Special Issue, (November 2000):1-26
- _____. "Environment and Capital: Notes for a History of the Wonji-Shoa Sugar Estate(1951-1974)." reprinted In *Society, State and History: Selected Essays*, Bahru Zewde, 120-146. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, 2009.
- Befekadu Degefe, "The Making of the Ethiopian National Currency: 1941-1945." *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 24, no 2 (December 1993): 23-51.
- _____. "The Development of Money, Monetary Institutions and Monetary Policy 1941-75." In *An Economic History of Modern Ethiopia , The Imperial Era 1941-74*, edited by Shiferaw Bekele, 232-276. Dakar: Codesria, 1995.
- Benton, Michael. "Literary Biography: The Cinderella of Literary Studies." *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 39, no. 3 (Autumn, 2005):44-57.
- Berhanu Abebe. "The Haile Sellassie I Prize Trust." *Northeast African Studies* 2, no. 3. New Series (1995): 53-66.

- Braudel, Fernand and Immanuel Wallerstein. "History and the Social Sciences: The Longue Durée." In *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 32, no. 2, (Commemorating the Longue Durée 2009): 171-203.
- Bulcha Demeksa, "The Ethiopian Budget." *Journal of Ethiopian Law* 4, no. 2, (1967):369-382.
- Calhun, Craig. "E. P. Thompson and the Discipline of Historical Context." *Social Research*, 1. 61, no. 2 (SUMMER 1994):223-243.
- Corns, Thomas N. "The Early Lives of John Milton." In *Writing Lives, Biography and Textuality, Identity and Representation in Early Modern England*, edited by Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker, 75-90. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Depelteau, Francois. "Relational Thinking: A Critique of Co-Deterministic Theories of Structure and Agency." *Sociological Theory* 26, no. 1 (March 2008):51-73.
- Desalegn Rahmato. "Political Power and Social Formation in Ethiopia Under the Old Regime: Notes on Marxist Theory." *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. I., Addis Ababa: Ababa University Press, (1988): 463-478.
- Donham, Donald. "Old Abyssinia and the New Ethiopian empire: themes in social history." In *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia. Essays in History and Social Anthropology*, edited by Donham and Wendy James, 3-48. Cambridge/Oxford: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Eshetu Chole. "Running to Keep in the Same Place: Industrialization 1941-1974." In *An Economic History of Modern Ethiopia, The Imperial Era 1941-74*, edited by Shiferaw Bekele, 464-478. Dakar: Codesria, 1995.

Elizabeth Wolde Giorgis. "Charting Out Ethiopian Modernity and Modernism." *Callaloo*, 33, no. 1 (Winter 2010):82-99.

Ezkiel Gäbissa. "The Italian Invasion, the Ethiopian Empire, and Oromo Nationalism: The Significance of the Western Oromo Confederation of 1936." *Northeast African Studies*, 9, no. 3, Special Issue: The Oromo in Ethiopian Studies: Confronting Challenges to Politically Engaged Scholarship (2002): 75-96.

Fikru Gebrekidan. "Pan- African Dialectics: Ethiopia, Africa, and the African Diaspora, 1941-74." In *Personality and Political Culture in Modern Africa*, edited by Tim Carmichael et al., 65-78. Boston :Boston University, 1998.

Gerard, Albert X. "Amharic Creative Literature: The Early Phase." *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 6, no. 2 (July 1968):39-59.

Gil, Thomas. "Leopold Ranke." In *A Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography*, edited by Aviezer Tucker, 383-392. Chichester: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009.

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. *International Organization* 22, no. 4 (Autumn, 1968):1002-1006.

Hailu Wäldä Amanuel. "The Geographical Characteristics of Western Ethiopia: Wälläga." *Ethiopian Geographical Journal* 1, no. 1 (1963): 31-43.

_____. "The Geographical Characteristics of Western Ethiopia: Wälläga." *Ethiopian Geographical Journal* 1, no.2 (1963): 22-38.

- Hultin, Jan. "Rebounding Nationalism: State and Ethnicity in Wollega 1968-1976." *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 73, no. 3 (2003): 402-426.
- Leckie, Shirley A. "Biography Matters: Why Historians Need Well-Crafted Biographies More than Ever." In *Writing Biography: Historians and Their Craft*, edited by Lloyd E. Ambrosius, 1-26. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2004.
- Keller, Edmond J. "The Ethnogenesis of the Oromo Nation and Its Implications for Politics in Ethiopia." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 33, no. 4(December 1995): 621-634.
- Mäkönnin Tägäñ. "Walda-Giyorgis Walda-Yohannes and the Haile Sellassie Government." *Northeast African Studies*, New Series, 4, no. 2 (1997):91-138.
- Mantel-Niečko, Joana. "Ethiopian literature in Amharic." In *Literature in African Languages: Theoretical Issues and Sample Surveys*, edited by B. W. Andrzejewski, S. Plaszewicz, W. Tysoch, 301-336. Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna State Publishing House, 1985.
- Mc Lellan, Charles. "Observations on the Ethiopian Nation, Its Nationalism, and the Italo-Ethiopian War." *Northeast African Studies*, New Series, 3, no. 1 (1996):57-86.
- Mevety, Amanda Kay "Pursuing Progress: Point Four in Ethiopia." *Diplomatic History* 32, no. 3 (June 2008):371-403.
- Merid Welde Aregay. Review of Yä' Itiyoṗiṗa Tarik Bä'Asrasīdīstānaw Kīflä Zāmān. by Yīlma Dērēssa. *Dialogue* 1, no. 1, (1967): 84-89.
- _____. "Yä Tewodros Alamawoç Käyät İndāmānāçu." In *Kasa and Kasa Papers on the Lives, Times and Images of Tewodros II and Yohannes IV*, edited by Taddese

- Beyene, Richard Pankhursy and Shiferaw Bekele, 69-117. Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies. 1990.
- Messay Kebede. "Gebrehiwot Baykedagn, Eurocentrism, and the Decentering of Ethiopia." *Journal of Black Studies* 36, no. 6 (July 2006):815-832.
- Myers, Edward D. "Forward." In *Byzantine Empire and the Crusades*, Yīlma Déréssa, not paginated, Addis Ababa: Haile Selassie I University Press, 1965.
- Novati, Giampaolo Calchi. "Re-establishing Italo-Ethiopian Relations after the War: Old Prejudices and New Policies." *Northeast African Studies*, New Series, 3, no. 1 (1996):27-49.
- Pankhurst, Richard. "The Foundation and Growth of Addis Ababa to 1935." *Ethiopia Observer*, 6, no. 1 (1962): 33-61.
- _____. "Tedla Hailé and the Problem of Multi-Ethnicity in Ethiopia." *Northeast African Studies*, New Series, 5, no. 3 (1998):81-96.
- Popa, Diana Elena and Villy Tsakona. "Humour in politics and the politics of Humour: An introduction." In *Studies in Political Humour*, edited by Popa Elena and Villy Tsakona, 1-30. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2011.
- Birgitte Possing. "The Historical Biography: Genre, History and Methodology." In *Writing Lives in Sport. Biographies, Life-histories and Methods*, edited by John Bale, Mette K. Christensen, Gertrud Phister, 17-25. Aarhus University Press, 2004.

- Schoppa, R.Keith. "Culture and Context in Biographical Studies: The Case of China." In *Writing Biography Historians and Their Craft*, edited by Lloyd E. Ambrosius, 27-52. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2004.
- Selak, Charles B. "The Suez Canal Base Agreement of 1954." *The American Journal of International Law*, 49, no. 4 (October 1955): 487-505.
- Shack, William. "Ethiopia and Afro-Americans: Some Historical Notes, 1920-1970." *Phylon*, 35, no. 2 (2nd Quarter 1974): 150-151.
- Shiferaw Bekele. "The Evolution of Land Tenure in the Imperial Era." In *An Economic History of Ethiopia, Vol. 1: The Imperial Era 1941-74*, edited by Shiferaw Bekele, 72-142. Dakar: Codesria, 1995.
- Shiferaw Jammo. "An Overview of the Economy 1941-74." In *An Economic History of Ethiopia, Vol. 1: The Imperial Era 1941-74*, edited by Shiferaw Bekele, 1-71. Dakar: Codesria, 1995.
- Silvera, Alain. Review of *Village College* by *Middle Eastern Studies*, 40, no. 1. (January 2004): 166-175.
- Smith, Louis M. "Biographical Method." In *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 286-305. Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 1994.
- Taddesse Tamrat, "Ethnic Interaction and Integration in Ethiopian History: The Case of the Gafat." *Journal of Ethiopian History*, 21, (1988): 124-154.

Taye Assefa and Shiferaw Bekele, "The Study of Amharic Literature: An Overview." *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 33, no. 2, Special Issue (November 2000):27-73.

Terrefe Woldetsadik, "The Unification of Ethiopia (1880-1935) Wälläga." *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 6, no. 1 (January 1968):73-86.

Tesema Ta'a. "The Bonayyaa Incident and the Italian Occupation of Naqamtee, 1936-1941." *Proceedings of the 13th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, 1(1997):263-285.

Teshale Tibebe. "On the Question of Feudalism, Absolutism, and the Bourgeois Revolution." *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*,13, no. 1 (Winter 1990): 49-152.

Tilly, Charles. "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime." In *From Bringing the State Back In*, edited by Peter Evans,Dietrich Rueschemeyer,and Theda Skocpol, 169-191. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Tillyard, Stella "Biography and Modernity: Some Thoughts on Origin." In *Writing Lives, Biography and Textuality, Identity and Representation in Early Modern England*, edited by Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker, 29-34. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Thompson, E.P. "Anthropology and the Discipline of Historical Context." *Midland History* 1, no. 3. Chichester: Phillimore, (1971).

Truilzi, Alessandro. "Nekemte and Addis Ababa:dilemmas of provincial rule." In *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia, Essays in History and Social Anthropology*, edited by Donham and Wendy James, 51-68. Cambridge/Oxford: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Vansina, Jan "Epilogue: Fieldwork in History." In *Pursuit of History: Fieldwork in Africa*, edited by Carolyn Keyes Adenaike and Jan Vansina, 127-140. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1996.

Vestal, Theodore M. "The Lion of Judah at Camelot: U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Ethiopia as Reflected in the Second State Visit of Emperor Haile Selassie to the United States." In *International Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 4, no. 1/2 (Spring/Fall 2009):135-152.

Woods, Tony. "Settlers and the State: A Political Biography of W.H. Timcke." In *Personalities and Political Culture and in Modern Africa*, edited by Melvin E. Page et al, 135-148. Boston: African Studies Center, Boston University, 1998.

C. Dictionaries and Encyclopedias

Abbink, Jon. "Ennarya." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 2. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005.

_____. "Relations with the Netherlands." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Alessandro Bausi and Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 5. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014.

Bairu Tafla. "Asfiha Wäldä Mika'el." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol 1. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003.

_____. "Gärmame Wäldä Hawaryat." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 2. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005.

Banti, Giorgio. "Harla." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 2. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005.

Bassi, Marco. "Abbaa bokkuu." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 1
Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003.

Baxter, Paul. "Galla." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 2.
Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005.

Carmichael, Tim. "Gimṅa bét." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 2.
Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005.

Erlich, Haggai. "Relations with Israel." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig,
Vol. 3. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007.

Garretson, Peter. "History of Addis Ababa." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert
Uhlig Vol. 1. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag. 2003.

Gascon, Alain. "Gimbi." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 2.
Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005.

_____. "Qoqa." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 4 Wiesbaden:
Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010.

Kaplan, Steven. "Aqqabe sä'at." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 1.
Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag. 2003.

Kendall, Paul Murray. "Biographical Literature." In *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th ed.
Vol 23. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica Inc. 2005.

Launhardt, Johannes. "Mammo Çorqa." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig,
Vol 3. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007.

- Mantel-Niećko, Joana. "Modern concepts of administrative division, Administrative division." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 1. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003.
- Mattausch, Birgit. "Gäbrä Hanna." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 2. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005.
- Merid Wolde Aregay. "Bägerond". in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 1. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003.
- Molvaer, Reidulf K. "Folktales in Amharic." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 2. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005.
- Nawas, John A. "Biography and Biographical Works." In *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Josef W. Meri, Vol. 1. New York: Taylor & Francis Group, LLC, 2006.
- New Encycloipedia Britannica. "Bandung." In *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 1, 15th ed. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., 2005.
- Nosnitsin, Denis. "Province of Šäwa." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig Vol. 4. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag. 2010.
- Novati, Giampaolo Calchi. "The Non-Aligned Movement." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 3. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007.
- Pankhurst, Richard. "Hunting." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 2. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005.

- _____. "Ivory" In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 2. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005.
- _____. "Kasa Wäldä Maryam." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 3. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007.
- _____. "Ménilek II Secondary School." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 3. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007.
- _____. "Ṭīqur Anbäsa." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 4. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010.
- _____. "Tributes and traditional taxation." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 4. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010.
- _____. "Young Ethiopians." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Alessandro Bausi and Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 5. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014.
- Paulos Milkias. "Yəḥlma Deressa." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica* edited by Alessandro Bausi and Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 5. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014.
- Prouty, Chris and Eugene Rosenfeld Metuchen eds. *Historical Dictionary of Ethiopia: African Historical Dictionary, Series no 32*. 2nd ed. New Jersey and London: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 1994.
- Pye, Lucian W. "Political Culture." In *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, edited by Sills David. Crowell Collier and MacMillan, Inc. 1968.

Rubinkowska, Hanna. "Bīrhaninna Sālam." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 1. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003.

Rudolf, "Absolutism." In *Marxism, Communism, and Western Society, A Comparative Encyclopedia*, edited by C.D. Kerring. New York: Herder and Herder, 1972.

Said, Samatar. "Muhammad Abdallah Hasan." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 3. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007.

Smidt, Wolbert. "Anfillo ethnohistory." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 1. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003.

Steven Kaplan, "Gädl." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 2. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005.

Theodore M. Vestal, "Relations with United States of America." In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Alessandro Bausi and Sighbert Uhlig, Vol. 4. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010.

Tsega Endalew, "Bakaree Godaana," In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Sighbert Uhlig and Alessandro Bausi, Vol. 5. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014.

D. Unpublished Secondary Sources

I. Unpublished Papers and Book

Assefa Beqeule and Eshetu Chole, "A Profile of Ethiopian Economy", Mimeographed,
Department of Economics, Haile Sellasse I University, 1967.

Taddesse Tamrat. "Hagiographies and the Reconstruction for the Medieval Ethiopian history" A
Paper Prepared for the Conference on Research Trends in Ethiopian History, March 14th
1970.

Yämanä Gäbrä Īgziabhér, "Séna Wärrä Bäkäré.", Manuscript (1971 E.C.), (Shared by
Tesema Ta'a, Professor of History Addis Ababa Universty).

II. Theses and Dissertations

Amsalu Temesgen. "Italian Occupation and Response in and Around Naqamte, 1936-1941." BA
Thesis in History, Addis Ababa University, 1983.

Atieb Ahmed Dafalla. "Sheikh Khojele Al-Hassan and Bela-Shangul (1825-1938)." BA thesis in
History, Haile Sellasse I University, 1973.

Bahru Demisse. "The Role of the Progressives in Ethiopian Politics 1909-1930)." B. A. Thesis in
History, Haile Sellasse I University, 1970.

Belete Belachew. "Ethiopia in African Politics, 1956 -1991." PhD Dissertation in History, Addis
Ababa University, 2012.

Brian James Yates. "Invisible Actors: The Oromo and the Creation of Modern Ethiopia (1855-
1913)". PhD Dissertation in History, University of Illinois, 2009.

- Daniel Ayana. "Land tenure and agriculture in Sayyoo-Afillo, Western Wallaga, Ethiopia, 1880-1974." PhD Dissertation in History, University of Illinois, 1995.
- Eshetu Chole. "Taxation in Ethiopia: An Analysis of Structure, Policy and Performance." MA Thesis in Economics, University of Illinois, 1968.
- Gemechu Taye. "The History of Macha Tulama Association." B.A. Thesis in History, Addis Ababa University, 1993.
- Haile Muluken. "A Diplomatic History of Ethio-Italian Relations, Ca. 1941-1991." PhD Dissertation in History, Addis Ababa University, 2014.
- Heran Sereke-Brhan. "Building Bridges, Drying Bad Blood: Elite Marriages, Politics and Ethnicity in 19th and 20th Century Imperial Ethiopia." Phd Dissertation in History, Michigan State University, 2002.
- Merid Wolde Aregay. "Southern Ethiopia and the Christian Kingdom 1508-1708, With Special Reference to the Galla Migrations and their Consequences." PhD Dissertation in History, School of Oriental and African Studies, Universty of London, 1971.
- Schaefer, Charles. "Enclavistic capitalism in Ethiopia, 1906-1936: A study of currency, banking, and informal credit Networks." PhD Dissertation in History, The University of Chicago, 1990.
- Schwab, Peter. "An Analysis of Decision-Making in the Political System of Ethiopia." PhD Dissertation in Political Science, New School for Social Research, NewYork, 1970.
- Shimelis Bonsa. "Urbanizing a Nation: Addis Ababa and the Shaping of the Modern Ethiopian State 1941 -1975." PhD Dissertation in History, UCLA, 2011.

Shiferaw Bekele. "The Railway, Trade, and Polity: A Historical Survey (1896-1935)." MA

Thesis in History, Addis Ababa University, 1982.

Tigab Bezie. "Political Satire in Ethiopian History, 1913-2005" PhD Dissertation in History,

Addis Ababa University, 2012.

III. List of Informants

No	Name	Title	Age (N.B.. at the date of the 1 st interview)	Place and Date of Interview	Remark
1	Asäfa Mängäša	<i>Ato</i>	83	Addis Ababa, April 27, 2015	-An Engineer and Official in the A.A. Manucipality and Water Department -Knowledgable informant on economic developments especially on water works in 1960s
2	Ašānafi Šifāraw	<i>Ato</i>	79	Addis Ababa March 12, 2015 ;July 11, 2014	Vice Minister of Finance in late 1960s and early 1970s, Knowledgable informant on Finance and Economic Development plans
3	Asfaw Damṭé	<i>Ato</i>	78	Addis Ababa December 20, 2013; December 02, 2014; March 13, 2015	-Vice-Minister of Finance in 1960s -Literary critic -knowledgeable informant especially on Loans and Credits in the Ministry, on the bureaucracy of the Imperial Government of Ethiopia
4	Ayalew Mandāfro	Ambassador	Early 70s	Addis Ababa, May 14, 2014	-Official at MOFA -Ambassador to Somalia in 1960s

5	Bä'īdā Mariam Mākonīn	<i>Lī'ul</i>	Early 50s	Addis Ababa, March 25, 2015	-Grandson of Emperor Hailä- Sillasse -Political Prisoner with Yīlma Déréssa at Grand Palace
6	Bäqälä Īndāšaw	<i>Ato</i>	Mid 70s	Addis Ababa, July 17, 2015	-Vice Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism since 1969 -Associate of Yīlma Déréssa in the Ministry
7	Bātru Admasé	<i>Ato</i>	84	Addis Ababa, April 07, 2015; May 20, 2015	-The First Ethiopian Manager of Telecommunications Authority -Political Prisoner with Yīlma Déréssa in 1970s
8	Biqila Kābaa	<i>Obo</i>	85	Çutta Gimbi July 18, 2014	-Farmer at Çutta -Knowledgable oral informant in the area
9	Bīrhanā Déréssa Danke	Mayor	74	Addis Ababa, December 22, 2013; March 03, 2015	-Grand Son of <i>Bilatta</i> Déréssa Amānté and Nephew of Yīlma Déréssa
10	Bulča Dāmāqsa	<i>Ato</i>	81	December 23, 2011;December 02 2013;July 01, 2014;July 20, 2014	-Vice-Minister of Finance in 1960s -Knowledgable informant on public expenditure of the Imperial Government in 1960s -Very close associate of Yīlma Déréssa
11	Čärnāt Waqwāya	<i>Obo</i>	Mid 50s	Naqamte July 19,2014	-Historian at the Cultural and Tourism Bureau of East Wallaga Zone of Oromia -Knowledgable oral informant on the geneology of <i>Wärä</i>

					<i>Bākäre</i>
12	Getačāw Mākaša	Dr.	-	E-Mail Interview, July 27, 2015	-Director of African Affairs Department in 1960s
13	Fīqrā Silassé Wägdāräs	Captain	-	Addis Ababa June 26, 2014	-Founding member of the Darg -Prime Minister of the Ethiopian Peoples Democratic Republic since 1987 -Knowledgable informant on the process of death sentence on political prisoners in 1974.
14	Habtä Silasse Tafäsä	<i>Ato</i>	89	Addis Ababa, February 01, 2014	-Commissioner of Tourism Commission since the period of the Imperial Era --Political Prisoner of PMAC with Yilma Déréssa
15	Hannah Yilma Déréssa	Wäyzäro	72	E-Mail Interview, February 16, 2015	-Daughter of Yilma Déréssa
16	Īḡigu Dāmīsé	Ato	Late 70s	Addis Ababa, July 29, 2015	-Son-in-law of Yilma Déréssa
17	Māngäša Sīyum Māngäša	<i>Li'ul Ras</i>	87	Addis Ababa November 25, 2014 ;March 05, 2015	-Hereditary ruler of Tigray Province since 1960. -Minister of Work and Communications -Knowledgable informant on the public expenditure during the Imperia Era
18	Mulugeta Etäfa	Dr, Ambassador	-	Addis Ababa October 24, 2014	-Closs associate to bilatta Déréssa and other members of the family
19	Nadāw Zākarias	Colonel	Early 70s	Addis Ababa, June 21, 2014	- Founding member of the Darg -Chair person of the

					Information and Propaganda Committee of the Darg -Knowledgeable informant on the process of death sentence on political prisoners in 1974.
20	Nägasa Fäysa	<i>Obo</i>	84	Gimbi July 17, 2014	-Merchant in Gimbi -Regular visitor of bilatta's family at Addis Ababa in 1950s and 1960s
21	Nīgusé Habtä Wäld	<i>Ato</i>	-	Addis Ababa, May 22, 2015	-Vice Minister of Information -Political Prisoner of PMAC with Yilma Déréssa
22	Simrät Mähdhané	Colonel		Addis Ababa, August 01, 2015	-The First CEO of the Ethiopian Airlines
23	Sofya Yilma Déréssa	<i>Wäyzäro</i>	70	Addis Ababa, June 8, 2014; June 18, 2014	-Daughter of Yilma Déréssa
24	Tädla Täšomä	<i>Ato</i>	79	Addis Ababa November 23, 2014; March 12, 2015	-Vice-Minister of Finance during the era of the imperial government -An expert on inland revenue and custom -Worked closely with Yilma in 1960s
25	Täsgära Tučo	<i>Obo</i>	Late 70s	Çutta, Gimbi July 18, 2014	-Farmer at Çutta -Knowledgeable oral informant in the surrounding area of Çutta
26	Täšomä Gäbrä-Mariyam	<i>Ato</i>	83	Addis Ababa, November 01, 2014; May 04, 2014	-Vice-Minister of Mining in the Imperial Government -Close associate of Yilma Déréssa especially at various places of

					Socialization -Knowledgable informant on political jokes about Yilma Déréssa
27	Wäldä Sämayat Gäbrä Wäld	<i>Däğazmač</i>	91	Addis Ababa December 13, 2015	-Vice-Minister of National Community Development -Knowledgable informant on public expenditure on development works
28	Yämanä İğgu	<i>Ato</i>	-	Addis Ababa, February 23, 2015	-Grandson of Yilma Déréssa.
29	Anonymous	<i>Ato</i>	45	Addis Ababa, April 16, 2015	-Archivist at Ministry of Pen

The following table reveals the list of informants whom Yämanä İğgu interviewed in USA and Ethiopia and shared to me.

No.	Name	Title	Date of interview	Remrak
1	Abäraš Déressa Amänté	<i>Wäyzäro</i>	March 8, 14, 1995.	-Sister of Yilma Déréssa
2	Amiha Täsäma	Colonel	February 6, 2000.	Brother-in-Law of Yilma Déréssa in his former marriage with Qidist Tasama
3	Mīnase Lamma	<i>Ato</i>	November 13, 1993	-Vice-Minister of Finance -Very Close associate of Yilma Déréssa
4	Täklé Roro Bäkäre	<i>Ato</i>	July, 1994	-Relative of Yilma Déréssa -One of the first civil servants at the Ethiopian Civil Aviation Authority

APPENDIX I Prison Testimony

እኔ፡ ደክንን፡ አበረከቼ አካላት = ማሳቅ = 27
 ገዥ ልጅ? ከ 40 ዓመት = አገልግሎት = ሙሉ
 3 - መስጫ ለገዥ = አገልግሎት ጋር፡ ደግሞ፡ ደግሞ
 ምዕ፡ በመንግሥት = ሙሉ ስራ፡ እንደዚሁ፡ ነገር = ገ
 ፊርማ፡ ሠራተኛ = አማሳኝ = እንደዚሁ = ልሳን ልጅ፡
 የሚሠራው = ገዥ = 20 = ተፈጻሚ = ደግሞ፡
 ሠራተኛ = ገዥ ስራ = ስራ = የሚሠራው = 376 ሰዓት
 376 ቁጥር፡ የሥራ ስራ = አቋም = 16 ዓመታት
 ስራ = በመስጫት = አቋም = እንደዚሁ = እንደዚሁ፡
 መሠረታዊ = 576 ሰዓት = አገልግሎት = አገልግሎት
 ምዕ፡ አምስት ሰዓት

- 1) የገዥ፡ ስራ ስራ = ማሳቅ = ገዥ =
 በገዥ ስራ = እንደዚሁ ስራ = ማሳቅ
- 2) በገዥ ስራ = እንደዚሁ ስራ = በማሳቅ፡
- 3) በገዥ ስራ = በማሳቅ፡
- 4) የሥራ ስራ፡ ገዥ ስራ = በመስጫት፡
- 5) የሥራ ስራ = ገዥ ስራ = የማሳቅ ስራ = እንደዚሁ
 ስራ = ስራ = ስራ = የሥራ ስራ = በማሳቅ
 ስራ = እንደዚሁ ስራ
- 6) የሥራ ስራ፡ የሥራ ስራ = በማሳቅ፡
- 7) የሥራ ስራ = የሥራ ስራ፡ የሥራ ስራ = የሥራ ስራ
 ስራ = የሥራ ስራ = በማሳቅ፡

A 2934-2957
SMMOPI

ስለዚህ ህ = ዓዛሬ ፡ = ዓኢትዮ ሄደ = ዓገላት = ነገላት = ዓገዳዝጋጠ፡ ሚኒስትር፡ ነገላ
 ተኞ (ሁ) ም = ሙጥ ላላት፡ ነገላት ሄደ ም = አስተዳዳሪ፡ ዓገላት = ዓስተዳዳሪ፡ ርዕሱ፡ አ
 ዓዲሁ ለው = ሁሉን ሁሉም = ነገላት ተኞት ም = ደህን፡ አዲስ = በጣም = አስተዳዳሪ፡ በሆነ
 ጊዜ ይ = አዲስ ሆኖ = ዓገላት = ነገላት = ዓገላት ሁሉን = አምላክ፡ ስታዲድሉ = ዓላማዊ፡
 ስም ይ = ስምዖን ሁሉ = ነገሮች = ላላት ሁሉን = በተገኙት = አዲስ ሆኖ ሁሉ = በተገኙት
 ስሙ ሁሉ = በጣም ስላለ፡ ያለው = ስላለው = ስላለው = ስላለው = ዓላማዊ፡ አላመሰግኑት =



ገለጽ፡ ሆኖ ወርቅ፡ ውህን፡ ያተሠራ፡ ሥራዎች፡ ገነብረዋል፡

፪ = ለፍንቀው፡ ለሠራተኛቸው፡ ለዎቹ፡ ጸገላቸው፡ ይገጥማቸዋል።

[illegible]

ሀ) የጽሑፊት፡ ክፍል፡ ለክፍል፡

$$A) \quad 972 = 96A =$$

መ) የግምገማ $\bar{X} = 12.75 = 94.41 = 56.6$.

(A) 875047: 765 =

ረ) የጠንገላዊ ሥራ፡ ግብረት፡ ነገሩ ል፡

ሰ) የጽሕፈት ጠላሪያ ርዕስ፡ የጠላሪያ ጥያቄ፡

ዓ) የገንዘብ ጠቅላይ ድርጅት በተቀየረ አካሄድ በፊት
አስተዳደር = ይገኛል።

1) 0 0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44 46 48 50 52 54 56 58 60 62 64 66 68 70 72 74 76 78 80 82 84 86 88 90 92 94 96 98 100

U) 973 H-N: 12.6, 6.6, 2.5, 1.5

h) $\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \delta(x) dx = 1$

(መ) የ ሐዘ ራቻ = ላብሮ = 1 ዲ.ሳ = ኦዋፔ = ኦኦም ሮዋቸሁ = ኦኦዲ

ጢጥር ስንተ ጠጥር፡ ሁሉ፡ ያረፉ የጥጽ ያህል፡ ታሪክ፡ የጢጥር ስንተ፡

የጣሪ ስል፡ ሥራ፡ ነጠብ፡ ጽደት፡ የገንዘብ፡ ሹጣጭነት፡

၇၀၄ နှစ် - ၈၀၇ = ၇၄ နှစ် : ၈၀၀ နှစ် - ၆၈၄ နှစ် = ၈

$$27: 9 \text{ } 22 \text{ } 376 = 70 = 1$$

(ii) $\varphi(n) \neq 1 \Rightarrow \varphi(n) = 2 \Rightarrow n = 2, 4$

2) $\frac{1}{2} \times 10 = 5$ ከሆነ $5 \times 10 = 50$ ነው።

ሰ) የጠላሪያ፡ ግብር፡ ያ፡ ምስ፡

Fi) 9 66 11: 70 2 7 11:

4) $969311 = 11037 = 10690 =$

በ) ማጠቃለያ ስራዎች ስርዓት ሲሆን፡

17

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

9

$$H(n) = 0.90722n - 0.4222$$
$$Z_A \cap W = Z_B \cap W =$$

APPENDIX III

IX III
D 2347, JGB MODIFIED
F.T.C. 1507

ФТС. 1507



የኢትዮጵያ ፡ ንጉሠ ፡ ነገሥት ፡ መንግሥት ፡

የትምህርትና ፡ የስነ ፡ ጥበብ ፡ ግዚስቲር ።

ጉዳዩ ፡ ከሀገሪቱ ወደ ወጪ ርቀው ቀረቡት ፡

	አርሽብ፡	+፭
የደረሰበት፡ ተን.	7/9/36	
ነገራ. ንክሰሐ		A/2

በግብር. ለ፪: ደብዳቤ ደብዳቤ

የገንዘብ ሚኒስቴር፣ ዋና ዲሬክቶር፡

ከዲህ ጀምሮ፡፡

ሥነ፡ ሮፍታሪ፣ ንጉሤ፣ ቀድሞ፣ በስጋ፣ ሐና፣ በጎረ፣ ይቀበሉት፣ የነበረውን።

በሰላማ ብርቅኤል ስንዓይስጢ በትምህርተና በስነ ፍቃዱ መሠረተር፡ ገለጻረብኝ፡ እመጋቢት ወር

ጸሐፊ: ስንደሠላ፣ ወሐንጥወን፣ የጽሕፈት፣ ሚኒስቴር፣ በቀን፣ 8267/3. የጸሐፊነት፣ 2082

ገቢዎቼ ምሥ. ጋር ልነገራቸዋልና፡ ስሙን ስጡኝ፡ ሚያዝያ ፲፬ ቀን ያህ፡ ቀንሳቸውን ስጡኝ፡

ጊዛብ፡ ሸማቹን ባዶ ፀጋዬ ሞረ ያድኝ ነኝ፤ አንዲነክበኝ በማክበር፤ እናመሰግናለሁ።



24074

7/10/07 W.L. & T. 20
298 FH: 8/1/06

B2322
TGB, MODFED



የኢትዮጵያ ንጉሠ ነገሥት መንግሥት
 የገንዘብ ጧኒስቲር

የጥቅምት ፩ ዓ.ም. ፳፻፲፱

*TC 166/407

አዲስ አበባ ፡ ፲፯ ነሐሴ ፲፱፻፱፡ ጥ፡

ደ.ደ.ረ.ክ. ህዝቅ. ገብረ. ማርያም : አዐንቲ :

ጥያ: ፪፻፺፯ ወ. ፳፻፲፱፡

ዓገዝብ፡ ሚኒስቴር፡ ሠራተኞች፡ ስም፡ ዝርዝርና፡ አባልነት
ቸውን፡ ሊከታ፡ ልክናልና፡ ሠራ፡ የፀመረ በጽን፡ ቀን፡ ነዋ
መረመረታሁ፡ ቀረባቸውን፡ እንድታከቡ፡ ይሁን።



ፕላን. ፕላን. ፕላን. ፕላን. ፕላን.

የፕላን. ፕላን. ፕላን. ፕላን. ፕላን.

የፕላን. ፕላን. ፕላን.

፩	ክፍል. ዓ. ል. ማ. ዓ. ል. ማ.	500.=
፪	" " ክፍል. ክፍል. (ማ. ል. ማ. ዓ. ል. ማ.)	75.=
፫	" " ተራራ. ል. ል. ማ. ዓ. ል. ማ.	50.=
፬	" " ዓ. ፕላን. ል. ል. ማ. ዓ. ል. ማ.	100.=
፭	" " ገጽ. ገጽ. ገጽ. ገጽ.	100.=

የፕላን. ፕላን. ፕላን.

፮	ክፍል. ዓ. ል. ማ. ዓ. ል. ማ.	300.=
፯	" " ተራራ. ገጽ. (ማ. ል. ማ. ዓ. ል. ማ.)	40.=
፰	" " ገጽ. ገጽ. ገጽ. ገጽ.	40.=

የፕላን. ፕላን. ፕላን.

፱	ክፍል. ገጽ. ገጽ. ገጽ. ገጽ.	300.=
፲	ክፍል. ዓ. ል. ማ. ዓ. ል. ማ.	200.=
፲፩	" " በቀኑ. ክፍል. (ማ. ል. ማ. ዓ. ል. ማ.)	80.=
፲፪	" " ተራራ. ተራራ. ገጽ. ገጽ.	80.=
፲፫	" " ክፍል. ተራራ. (ማ. ል. ማ. ዓ. ል. ማ.)	45.=
፲፬	" " ዓ. ፕላን. ገጽ. ገጽ. ገጽ.	30.=
፲፭	" " ገጽ. ገጽ. ገጽ. ገጽ.	25.=
፲፮	" " ተራራ. ክፍል. ገጽ.	20.=

የገቢት ጥቅምት = 1985 =

የገቢት ጥቅምት ገቢት

17	ክፍል: ዘገርያብ: ተክሌ	የገቢት ጥቅምት ገቢት	250. =
18	ክፍል: ደብዳቤ: ርሮ	የገቢት ጥቅምት ገቢት	150. =
19	ክፍል: ናይብ: ደብዳቤ	የገቢት ጥቅምት ገቢት	120. =
20	ክፍል: ሥፍራ: ገቢት ጥቅምት	(ደብዳቤ)	45. =

የገቢት ጥቅምት ገቢት ጥቅምት

21	ክፍል: ተክሌ: ደብዳቤ	የገቢት ጥቅምት ገቢት	250. =
22	ክፍል: ደብዳቤ: ደብዳቤ	የገቢት ጥቅምት ገቢት	100. =

የገቢት ጥቅምት ገቢት ጥቅምት

23	ክፍል: የገቢት ጥቅምት ገቢት	የገቢት ጥቅምት ገቢት	150. =
24	ክፍል: ደብዳቤ: ደብዳቤ	የገቢት ጥቅምት ገቢት	50. =
25	ክፍል: ተክሌ: ደብዳቤ	የገቢት ጥቅምት ገቢት	45. =

የገቢት ጥቅምት ገቢት

26	ክፍል: ደብዳቤ: ደብዳቤ	የገቢት ጥቅምት ገቢት	100. =
27	ክፍል: ደብዳቤ: ደብዳቤ	የገቢት ጥቅምት ገቢት	60. =

ተጨማሪ ገቢት

28	ክፍል: ደብዳቤ: ደብዳቤ	የገቢት ጥቅምት ገቢት	20. =
29	ክፍል: ደብዳቤ: ደብዳቤ	የገቢት ጥቅምት ገቢት	12. =
30	ክፍል: ደብዳቤ: ደብዳቤ	የገቢት ጥቅምት ገቢት	12. =
31	ክፍል: ደብዳቤ: ደብዳቤ	የገቢት ጥቅምት ገቢት	12. =
32	ክፍል: ደብዳቤ: ደብዳቤ	የገቢት ጥቅምት ገቢት	12. =
33	ክፍል: ደብዳቤ: ደብዳቤ	የገቢት ጥቅምት ገቢት	12. =

የዘረዘረው ድምር: $\$$

3385 =

በገንዘብ-ማረከተር-ሲሙት-ጥይተው-ከሁገ-ወደ-

ዚያ-ገንዘብ-የሚዛወሩ:

b	ከተ-ተከማቸው (የገቢ-የጥሬ-የጥሬ-ገንዘብ)	120 =
c	ከተ-በረታታው (ዋና-ገንዘብ)	100 =
d	" " ከደማቅ-ገንዘብ (ገንዘብ)	45 =
e	" " መዝገብ-ተከማቸው (" " "	40 =
f	" " ከዋሽጥ-ገንዘብ (" " "	30 =





14/1

APPENDIX V

37

Personal File HD, MOFED

አዲስ አበባ ፡ ታሪክ

የሰነድ ፡ ምዝገባ

የኢትዮጵያ ፡ ንጉሠ ፡ ነገሥት ፡ መንግሥት ፡

የሚኒስትሮች ፡ ምክር ፡ ቤት ፡

666/37 24

አገልግሎት ፡ ከፍተኛ ፡ ደረጃ ፡

የገንዘብ ፡ ምክትል ፡ ሚኒስትር ፡

ክፍል ፡ ሆኖ ፡

በጥር ፡ ፲ ቀን ፡ በሚኒስትሮች ፡ ምክር ፡ ቤት ፡ ሰዊጥ
፤ በመቅረቱ ፡ ጉጉዳዊ ፡ ሥራውን ፡ ከሠራ ፡ አካል
፤ ፤ አገልግሎት ፡ በጥር ፡ ፲ ቀን ፡ አርብ ፡ ከገገ
፡ ዲ.ወ. ፡ አገልግሎት ፡ በማክበር ፡ አገልግሎት ፡ ይሰጣል ፡

በማክበር ፡ አገልግሎት ፡ ይሰጣል ፡

[Signature]

29

[Handwritten notes and signature]
1/5/89

A.A. 28-9-37. B.S. No. 1987-1,000.

APPENDIX VI
D4084-4185
SM. MOFFET

no 106/45
ADDIS ABABA,
12/3/1945.

7/38

Richard S. Leach, Esquire,
F. E. A. Representative,
ADDIS ABABA.

Dear Sir:

I acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 12th March, 1945, reference ELM-2, for which I thank you.

I have taken due note of the points which you mention and am pleased to advise that Ato Gabre Mariam Amanti, Chief Treasurer of the Imperial Ethiopian Government, and Mr G. A. Blowers, Governor of the State Bank of Ethiopia, have been authorized by me to receive these goods jointly or severally from the United States Army and F.E.A. authorities. They will check these goods as received and sign temporary receipts therefor covering each cargo load. They have been instructed to make all arrangements for the unloading of this cargo and the removal of it after it has been unloaded.

The State Bank has been instructed to pay or prepay all costs of transshipping these goods including handling, warehousing etc. at Jibuti and freight to Addis Ababa.

We are also pleased to make arrangements to supply such mode of transportation as is needed by the United States Army officers and enlisted men while they are in Addis Ababa.

I wish to take this occasion to thank you for your kind co-operation and help in this matter.

Yours very truly,

4/6
VICE MINISTER OF FINANCE.

Copies to:

The Chief Treasurer.

Governor of the State Bank.

FOREIGN ECONOMIC ADMINISTRATION

7/38

APPENDIX VII OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

D 4048-4185

SM, MOFD

ADDIS ABABA
May 28, 1945
Ref: EML-53

~~RECEIVED~~
~~COMMUNICATIONS~~

H.E. The Vice Minister of Finance
The Ministry of Finance
Addis Ababa

RECEIVED	29/5/45
24/6/45	

Excellency:

I have been instructed by the authorities of the Foreign Economic Administration to obtain your receipt on special forms provided by the FEA for recent shipments of coins to the Ethiopian Government and for the cost of minting thereof, the latter amounting to \$165,000.

I am further requested to suggest by way of formality, that your signature be made in the presence of the American Minister. Would you kindly advise me when it would be convenient for you to accompany me to the American Legation for this purpose, your signature to be obtained against the temporary receipts for coins which I now hold and which I believe were delivered to the satisfaction of the State Bank of Ethiopia.

Very truly yours,

Richard S. Leach 10

Richard S. Leach
FEA Representative

Mr. Ayer
Please write and answer that H.E. is ready to sign receipt at his office in the Ministry of Finance in the presence of Mr. Leach & that he would like to know when & at what time Mr. Leach is ready to come up to the Ministry of Finance to

D. S. F.

Notes: See sub item 2. He has signed the signature of

က ၇၀၀၇၇: ၆၃၄၉:

$\varphi_1, \varphi_2, \varphi_3 = \varphi_1, \varphi_2, \varphi_3: \mathcal{A} \rightarrow \mathcal{B}: \varphi_1, \varphi_2, \varphi_3 =$

አመረከኝ ሆኖብኩ ለዓቅ = ሆኖ ለዋቅድ የሚከፈልኩት፡ ይህ

PH 6, 2H = 732 W = 47 μ ± = 0.37 μ ± = 2.7 + 9.4 C

ሥራዎች = ሆኑ ቀዳሚነትና - ኢያሱ: የሚገኘው = የቀዳሚነት

[illegible]

ከፕሮፌ. ሶሙያስሃዳሳ-ፋቂ = ክሉሪያ: ገርማዊናቆዎ: ለ.ዘ.ሀ

4: സമാനത: $PQ \parallel MN$ - $PO = ON$ (പ്രകാരം)

ሥራ = ሆኖ የሚገኘውን፣ ጥራ = ጥረት = እንዲያርግ የሚ

ያዘኑኑ፡ መሆኑን፡ የኢትዮጵያ፡ ሕዝብ፡ የብቃት፡ ጥምረት

Q. 4: $7 \times 25 = 175$ $175 \div 5 = 35$ $35 \times 4 = 140$ $140 \div 2 = 70$

ሐ = አላ ሚታረገ፡ ግር ሚታ ምንጭ = በግልጽ = ምላሽ ይገባል

$\omega = \frac{1}{2} \hbar \omega_p = \frac{1}{2} \hbar \sqrt{\frac{4\pi n e^2}{m}}$

ደረሱ ስለጋራ፡ ደረሱ፡ አንድሁ - የቀጥሎ ማርቆስ፡ ሙሉ - በመጨረሻ፡

በሰውነት ጥንቃቄ ለማድረግ የሚያስፈልጉትን ምርመራዎች ያድርጉ፡

例 1: 已知 $\triangle ABC$ 中, $\angle A = 60^\circ$, $\angle B = 45^\circ$, $\angle C = 75^\circ$, $AB = 10$, 求 BC 的长.

$\frac{1}{2} \cdot \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4}$

ጥቅምት ፳፱፡ ምስል፡ ፲፬፻፶፭፡ ዓ.ም - ፲፯፻፷፫ - ሐይለማርያም - ፲፩ ፲፱፻፸፮፡ ዓ.ም
፲፩፻፹፪ - ከዚህ በኋላ፡ ምስል፡ ፲፮፻፺፫፡ ዓ.ም፡ የጣልያን / ሙሉ፡ ኢየሱስ፡ ክርስቶስ

[illegible]

甲子：九日十月九日 = 亥月八日 = 九月廿四日
 乙丑：九日十月九日 = 亥月八日 = 九月廿四日

$\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4}$

በጥቅም ላይ የሚውል፡ የፍጥነት ለውጥ፡ ማንኛውንም ለውጥ ሊኖር ይችላል፡

[illegible]

ከጥሪ) ይጽፉ፡ ምሳጣሪዎች፡ አደጋችሁ፡ ስለሆነ፡ ስለሆነ

ው፡ ንኢሩ፡ ስላሁቱ፡ ወህን ንክሉ፡ ፈገገገ፡ ባሕሩ ይዝፍ፡ እ

7193: 12 3 0: 0H - 00 5 = 004 00 7 5: 006 = 0 0 0 0

በዚህ ጉዳይ ግርማዊነቱን ገብቶ ያሳውቅ እንደሆነ ተረጋግጧል።

ቅ: ስለሚሉት ፍቅር ስለሚገኝ ሆኖ: ለሰላም = ምስጋና ስለሚገኝ: ምስጋና = ምስጋና

ከታየ = ወልቅ ምሕረቅ = ማኒኒክፍር፡ ተዛወረ፡ አሙከራቅ፡ በ

125: 88 43: 18972 890:

ጋዜጣችን ስለሆነ፡
ጊዜው ይህን



አዲስ አበባ

ቀን 18

ዓ.ም 2000

የኢትዮጵያ ገንዘብ ሥርዓት ማሻሻያ ምክር ቤት

የጥቅም ስልጣን ሚኒስትር ጽሕፈት ቤት

APPENDIX IX
AG12-956
\$M, MORED

የጥቅም ስልጣን ሚኒስትር	ቀን
የጥቅም ስልጣን ሚኒስትር	ቀን
የጥቅም ስልጣን ሚኒስትር	ቀን
የጥቅም ስልጣን ሚኒስትር	ቀን

አዲስ አበባ
ዓ.ም 2000

ለክፍል አቶ ይልማ ዳረሙ

የገንዘብ ሚኒስትር

አዲስ አበባ::

ክፍል ሆይ:-

ለጣገ አባላት የገንዘብ ሥርዓት ማሻሻያ ምክር ቤት የሚከናወን ውሳኔ ሂሳብ በገንዘብ ሚኒስትሩ በመቀየቱ ያስከተለውን ቸገር ገልጾው ከፍተኛ ሥራ/ ሥራ ስራ ወይም ሌላ ምክር ቤት ሚኒስትር በኔ 16 ቀን 1956 ዓ.ም በቀጥታ 1263/ 150 በአስተዳደር ሚኒስትሩ ለክፍል ነትም የሚከተለውን ገልጾው ይገልጻል::

ከዚህ ቀደም በኋላ በቀዳሚው አዲስ አበባ በገንዘብ ሚኒስትሩ ለ1956 ዓ.ም የተጠየቀው ከፍተኛ ሥራ ስራ በመቀየቱ ቸገር ያስከተለው ወሆኑ ስለተገለጸ:: ከፍተኛ ሥራ/ ሥራ ወይም ሌላ ምክር ቤት ሚኒስትር የሚከተለውን ይገልጻል:: ከዚህ ጋር ልክል ያታለሁና ከፍተኛ ሥራ/ ሥራ በቀጥታ ተከታታይነት አስፈላጊው በቀጥታ አገልግሎት አገልግሎት በሚከናወን ሚኒስትሩ ለሰጠው ውሳኔ::=====



ከጣክበር በላይ ታይቶ:-

Handwritten signature

አዲስ አበባ ጥቅም ስልጣን ሚኒስትር

ጥቅም ስልጣን ሚኒስትር

ገልጾ/

ለክፍል አቶ ይልማ ዳረሙ

የገንዘብ ሚኒስትር

አዲስ አበባ::

3



የኢትዮጵያ ንጉሠ ነገሥት መንግሥት
የገንዘብ ሚኒስቴር ።

IMPERIAL ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT
MINISTRY OF FINANCE

1/57

APPENDIX X
A 912-956 \$M. MODIFIED

No. 90/224

Addis Ababa *chyo h* 7/4/57 1957

ለክብር ጸሐፊ ትዕዛዝ አክሊሉ ሀበተ ወልደ
ጳጳስ ሚኒስትርና የጸሐፊት ሚኒስትር
አዲስ አበባ፡፡

ክብር ሆይ ፡

በኔ 18 ቀን 1956 ዓ.ም. በተገር 1499 / 4 / 2 / 2 / የተሰጠ ገንዘብ
ደብዳቤ በግንባር አስታውቋለሁ፡፡ በ1955 ዓ.ም. ለግን አበሉኝ በጥቃቱ በጀት
የተፈተደላቸው \$1.208.290 በቻ ሲሆን በ1955 ዓ.ም. \$300.000 በር
አገዳሚ ርሳት በተወጣፈ በጀት ተደባ ለፓርላማ ተርቦ ተወጥሮ በጀት የተፈተደው
በ1955 ዓ.ም. በጀት የውጭ ጋራ ላይ ይሆኑ ይታወቃል፡፡ በበጀት አጭ አፍ
በሕገ - ገንዘብ መሠረት ከብሔ 30 በኋላ የ1955 ዓ.ም. ሂሳብ ለመክፈል ሕጋዊ
የሆነ - ገንዘብ ለኛ አላውጥኩም ገልጾ የሆነ ነገር ነው፡፡ ነገር ግን ይህ ገንዘብ
መክፈል ስላለበት የክፍሉ መጠን ቤት ጉዳዩን ለሚኒስትሮች ምክር ቤት አቀርቦ
ከ1956 ዓ.ም. በጀት ድገትና ወደ አገራዊ ጥቅም ይገባ ነበር፡፡ የገንዘብ
ሚኒስትር ላይ ተመላሽ በበጀት የተፈተደውን ገንዘብ መክፈል በላይ ያለፈትን ገንዘብ
ለመሸፈን የጣቢያ ገንዘብ አስታውቋለሁ፡፡ ይህም የታወቀ ሁላችንም ተቀብለን የገንዘብ
ሠራተኛ አሠራር ሲሆን ምናልባት አሠራሩ ይረባል በግላት ይህ ጉዳይ ለበላይ መቅረብ
አገዳላቸው ይገባል ፡፡ ለገንዘብ ለመርራቃት ሠራተኞች ጳጳስ ሕገ ግዛት ጽ/ቤት በኃላ
ገልጸዋል፡፡ አገዳሚ የገንዘብ ሚኒስትር ከሥልጣኑ ከተነሳሩ ወጭ አልሠራም በግላት
የተሠነዘሩበት ወተባ በጥልቀት ቢታሰብበት አላገባብ ነው በጥቃቱ አጭላለሁ፡፡ አሁንም
ሲሆን ይህን ሂሳብ ሕገ - ገንዘብ መክፈል የሚቻለው ከ1957 ዓ.ም. ተወጥሮ በጀት
አገዳሚን አስረዳለሁ አርዎች አገዳሚው ይህን ግስታዊ አቅርቦት ታታለሁ፡፡

ከፍ ባለ የአክብሮት በላይ ታገር፡፡

ሪ

ደ.ል.ማ ደ.ራ.ሣ
ሚኒስትር ።

4

HAILE SELASSIE I UNIVERSITY

MLB : MBI : LBPES :

ADDS AREA, ETHIOPIA

IELMS 2463(A)

100

UNIV

9998 26A 440 04003 004 0000 2A 712

1104 12 21 1959 א.פ.

ጠቅላይ ልማት ሚኒስቴር፡-

1. በቦር ከቶ ይልግ ዲረባ በባባሊ
2. " ቢገደድ አባቱ ወለደ ሕገሰ - አባል
3. " ልጅ ከሆነ ወለደ ግርም "
4. " ይከተሉ ኃይለ ጊዮርጊስ ወርቅነህ "
5. ሊቶ ሥልጣናት አባ ሀብተ ግርም ወርቅነህ "
6. ከቶ ወገሽት ይልነሣሁ - የቦርቶ ልጅ ናችኋለን፡፡

PC 4 9+1374070 7907:-

15 / ለፋህርቢው ልዩ ልዩ አገዳጅ ከሚሰጠው ጋር ለሰላም ጋር

25 / ለተፃፃፂ ጋዜጠኛ ሥላሴ ዩኒፎርሚት ጥራት ከፈዘበ እየተበሰሰ አባባል
የሚመዘገብ ገንዘብ እሥራ ላይ ስለጥፃለች፡

35 / ለፋሺስቲው የአካሄድ ምክትል ፕረዛገንት ለሎዶረግ ነው።

15 / 12.1995
 1069 001770
 000

በደረ የግንኙነት የክልልነት ግንኙነት በአዲስ አበባ
በጉንደር የአዘዘ ዲና ቀበሌ በሊዩ ለዕርዳታ ያሠራቸዋል
ተባለው የነበረበት በቀሪባሪው የደ ሹር ነበረ

U / 949697 270 015 0000000 0900

Λ / 3000 ተፈጻሚ ሊይዝ የሚችል የተጠፈ

569 247

0 / 17720 05 409 0000 000 000 000 000

ዕለት አባባዝ ያለው ከጋራ ተፈ \$296.784፣ ሲሆን ዘመናዊ
ተለዩ ገዛት አየተሰበሰበ አባባዝ ገቢ ባህሪን በመጽገን ጸል
ረት ቢሆን የየየ \$70.000 ሙሉ ተገልጾ ገንዘብ በተደረገበት
በጋላ ተሸርቦት በዚህ ሕግ ዕለት በተሰጠው \$1.806 000
ያለው ሙሉ በሌላው ገንዘብ ለሌላው ሙሉ በሌላው የገንዘብ
ዕለት ተደርጎ ለመሆኑ ሙሉ በሙሉ ቢሆን አየተሰጠ ገንዘብ ለ
በገዥ የሚቻል ልዩነት አግኝቶ ተፈጻሚ ሆኖ ተሰጥቶ ለ
የገንዘብ ልዩነት የገንዘብ ገንዘብ የሚያስፈልገውን ገንዘብ ገንዘብ
የገንዘብ ልዩነት ለመሆኑ ሙሉ በሙሉ ለመሆኑ ሙሉ በሙሉ
ተፈጻሚ ሆኖ ተሰጥቶ ለገንዘብ ልዩነት ሙሉ በሙሉ
ዕለት ሙሉ በሙሉ ለመሆኑ ሙሉ በሙሉ ለመሆኑ ሙሉ በሙሉ

35 / ለአካላዊ
ዕለት ሂሳብ
ዕለት ሙሉ
ረጅም

ይህ ዕለት የሚታወቅ የሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ
የገንዘብ ልዩነት በሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ
የሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ
አስፈላጊ ሙሉ በሙሉ ለመሆኑ ሙሉ በሙሉ ለመሆኑ ሙሉ በሙሉ
ዕለት ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ
ያንድ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ
በሙሉ ሙሉ በሙሉ ለመሆኑ ሙሉ በሙሉ ለመሆኑ ሙሉ በሙሉ
ረጅም ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ ሕግ
ተፈጻሚ ሆኖ ተሰጥቶ ለገንዘብ ልዩነት ሙሉ በሙሉ
ዕለት ሙሉ በሙሉ ለመሆኑ ሙሉ በሙሉ ለመሆኑ ሙሉ በሙሉ

ሕግ ሕግ
አስፈ.

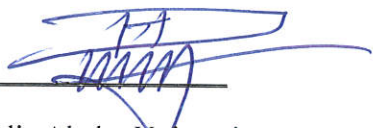
ሕግ ሕግ
በሕግ

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this dissertation is my work and that all the sources for the dissertation have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Tamrat Haile Degeffa

Signature: _____



Place: Addis Ababa University

Date of Submission : June 2016