The Ethiopian Army and the 1974 Revolution

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1974 was a year of fundamental change in Ethiopia. It saw a process that resulted in the fall of the old imperial regime and its replacement by a group of young officers who aimed to revolutionizing their society, with all due strategic implications for the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea. This article is an attempt to analyze the pivotal roles played by the various sectors in Ethiopia's armed forces in the course of the 1974 political developments. In a general concluding note, the role of the military in the Ethiopian experience will be compared to that in neighboring African and Middle Eastern countries.

The army built by Emperor Haile Selassie during the post-World War II period was probably the smallest in Ethiopia's long history. In the past, whenever threatened from the outside, the country could rapidly mobilize over 200,000 soldiers. Such was roughly the number of warriors in the various provincial "feudal" armies prior to modernization. Haile Selassie's modernization and centralization meant in this context the disarmament of rural Ethiopia and the establishment of a Western-trained, centralized army numbering only some 45,000 professionals. This new army proved strong enough to face the external challenges of the 1950s and 1960s and to serve as the dependable pillar of the imperial regime.

Generally speaking the army was made up of four divisions, an Air Force (based in Debra-Zeit, 40 miles from Addis Ababa and in

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Asmara), and a small navy. Division I, also known as the Imperial Guard, was stationed around the capital and was in charge of supporting the regime. Division II, centered on Asmara, was in charge of fighting the Eritrean separatists; the Harar-based, mechanized Division III faced the Somalis; and Division IV, with headquarters in Addis Ababa, was in charge of the South and the West.

Like other sectors of Ethiopian society the military under Haile Selassie was said to undergo depoliticization. Indeed, Haile Selassie's centralization of power—demilitarization of the provinces, avoidance of establishing political parties and organizations, repression of any attempt to express new ideas, and frustration of political cooperation through the systematic promotion of rivalries among the leading members of the bureaucracy and army—led to the political neutralization of Ethiopia's state machinery. It was through this paradox—Haile Selassie's managing to build politically neutralized yet modern arms in the service of medieval and political absolutism—that he was during the 1950s and 1960s the strongest emperor in his country's annals.

Yet during the late 1960s the regime—soon to revolve around an aging absolutist—the military and other sectors as well were undergoing cover and politicization. At that time the formation in the armed forces of three sociopolitical classes, each to play a clearly definable role in the making of the 1974 revolution, could be discerned. These classes were:

(1) *the military upper class* (from the rank of colonel). It was an integral part of the ruling establishment.
(2) *"a middle class in the making"* composed of junior and intermediate officers. It was made up of officers in their twenties and early thirties who, like members of the civil intelligentsia, had been making their way up the hierarchy and the socioeconomic ladder. Sociopolitical mobility by the ambitious had always been an option in Ethiopia, and the process of such mobilization and integration into the ruling establishment had been accelerated by Haile Selassie's modernization. By the 1960s, however, the process was slowing down. Though many junior officers were academically trained, fewer and fewer made it into the establishment. Their majority was therefore undergoing self-politicization, coming to oppose the regime for practical as well as ideological reasons.
(3) *the rank and file and NCOs.* Like other members of the country's "silent majority," they were bearing the brunt of the regime's increasing

inability to cope with the growing socioeconomic challenges of the late 1960s and early 1970s. However, as members of the military, and unlike their fellow civilians who lacked organization, Ethiopian soldiers, in the line of a long tradition, were capable of manifesting corporative protest, and they put pressure on their superiors in order to improve their lot.

Such a sociopolitical division—a ruling establishment, "a middle class in the making," and the "silent majority"—reflected the realities of Ethiopian society in general. It was essentially because the members of the military were naturally better organized and that their activities were more effective that the army, by no means the only maker of the revolution, played the pivotal role in the 1974 developments.

As this analysis will show, what Ethiopia underwent in 1974 was not the fulfillment of a preplanned revolution but rather the collision of a powerful and spontaneous protest movement with a self-paralyzed regime.

The process started in February 1974 with the emergence of an NCO-led protest movement of the rank and file (and the simultaneous activities of civil protesters and revolutionaries). The "February Movement" in the army proved effective enough to deprive the ruling political establishment of its power base, but it lacked both the intention and organization to institutionalize a political revolution. Thus the *ancien regime* was granted a period of grace during which it tried to reorganize its shattered military support. Yet the members of the ruling establishment, occupied with their now-culminating internal game of power and intrigue, were both unable to restrain the growing protest and blind to the possibility that the revolutionary-minded intermediate officers might come to lead the protesters. In June 1974, with these officers establishing the "Derg," the collective power of the protest movement was channeled into a political revolution.

As will be concluded below, this process of revolution—activated essentially by a protest movement rather than by organized revolutionaries—caused the destruction of the old political establishment and Ethiopia's state machinery. The fully politicized army was rendered ineffective as a deterrent to Ethiopia's external enemies and as the main support of the new leadership. Consequently, the new collegial leadership of the Derg, itself torn by violent internal rivalries, was hardly in a position to implement a revolution in Ethiopia. Noth-

ing of substance could be achieved until Ethiopia's state machinery was reconstructed. The process of such a reconstruction would be consonant with the rebuilding of Ethiopia's army. Unlike Haile Selassie's professional army, the new army would once again be a force recruited from peasants. Its organization, started only three years after the upheavals of 1974, would be the first step toward stability.

High-Ranking Officers in Politics Prior to the Revolution[1]

The holders of the higher ranks in the 1974 Ethiopian army were members of a military elite that emerged around the time of World War II. In sharp contrast to the traditional/provincial military class (partially eliminated by the fascist invaders), the new group was the product of the centralizing efforts of Hailie Selassie and belonged originally to the Imperial Guard. Many members of that group had been recruited by the emperor from the lower social ranks. Others were recruited among the leading families. The number of Amhara officers has always been great but never overwhelmingly so. Tigreans (including Eritreans), Oromos, Gurage, and others (though very few Muslims) could always be found in important positions.[2] During the postwar period this new modern military elite, given lands and high salaries, assimilated into the upper administrative ruling elite created by Haile Selassie.[3] In both its economic basis and its conceptual approach to the needed rate of change, this group was quite an integral part of the agrarian elite.[4] This, together with internal ethnic antagonism and personal rivalries, enabled Haile Selassie to neutralize successfully the potential political power of the officer class. They were systematically taught to stay away from politics and become an exclusively professional group. According to the motto of the Bodyguard's official publication: "The soldier's work is to follow orders, not to engage in politics."[5]

A few important representatives of that officers' class did, however, venture into politics. In December 1960, while the emperor was abroad, the two brother revolutionaries, Mangistu and Girmame Neway, led an attempted *coup d'etat* that failed mainly because the

overwhelming majority of the high-ranking army officers remained loyal to Haile Selassie.[6] Even so, they remained a source of inspiration to young officers and students. Leaflets telling their story were distributed by the revolutionaries throughout 1974.

The abortive coup of 1960 and especially the way it was frustrated strengthened the status of the army elite as a main support of the imperial regime. Military activities (mainly on the Somali border, but also in Eritrea and in UN contingents in Korea and the Congo) further increased the prestige of the military. The officers, though the natural bearers of advanced technology, efficiency, and supratribal nationalist sense of affiliation,[7] did not "form a cohesive group with common interests and ambitions."[8] The majority of them lacked both the motivation and the solidarity necessary to oppose the emperor. Consequently, even shortly before the 1974 events themselves, on-the-spot observers discerned no trouble afoot. The high-ranking army officers were looked to not as a source of opposition to the regime but rather as a main pillar of the existing order. For example, an authoritative survey of Haile Selassie's regime completed just a few months before the 1974 revolution began, included no more than six pages on the political role of the military, and even this understandably in a chapter analyzing Haile Selassie's power base.[9]

As Haile Selassie's regime was approaching its end, the upper echelons of the officers' class inevitably became more concerned with their role in future developments. In the 1970s, internal grouping and the various rivalries were of increasing political significance, though never a threat to the existing system. Among such groups[10] the better-known one, the "Exiles," was composed of officers who had returned in 1941 to Ethiopia with the liberating armies. Prominent among them were Lt. Gen. Assafa Demise, the emperor's ADC, and Lt. Gen. Dabbab Haila-Mariam, commander of the Eritrea-based Second Division. Another group was composed of young officers headed by Lt. Gen. Assafa Ayene, the Chief of Staff. A third group consisted of Shoan officers led by Minister of Defence Lt. Gen. Ababa Gemeda (himself of Oromo origin).[11] In 1973 all of them were actively involved in the royal palace intrigues or in strengthening their personal positions in preparation for the struggle for power that was expected following Haile Selassie's death.

In reality this struggle for future power had been already long in progress. The leading contenders belonged to two very loosely coordinated groups. The one known as the "Shoan nobility group" was made up of members of families that had gained prominence in the

empire during the period of emperor Menelik II (1884-1913). Though they remained in positions of power, their influence was reduced by Haile Selassie's post-World War II modernization. The leading figure of this loose group was the head of the Crown Council *Ras* Asrate Kasa; others were such personalities as *Lij* Endalkatchaw Makonnen and the Senate member Abiy Ababa. Almost all the Exiles were affiliated with the "Shoan nobility." The members of other groups of high-ranking officers were considered to be cooperating with a group of leading personalities contending with the Shoan nobility in future power. This group was made up essentially of personalities whose power had been promoted by Haile Selassie as from the 1940s and who were holding the main positions in government. This group was led by *Tsahefe Tezaz* Aklilu Habta-Wald, Ethiopian prime minister since 1961, and included many of his ministers. As will be sketched below, the developments of the first half of 1974 were to bring about the culmination of the power struggle between these personalities and result in the destruction of them all.

Junior and Intermediate Officers Prior to the Revolution—A Politicized Group

At the same time, during the 1960s, a new officers' class was developing in response to the need to expand the army, both to meet external challenges and to strengthen the central administration. Many of these new officers were recruited from young members of the Ethiopian intelligentsia and were given three years intensive military and academic training in the Military Academy established at Harar in 1957. The first graduating class, consisting of 35 officers, was in 1960, with each successive year producing about fifty more. In 1971 the first Harar graduated reached the rank of major.[12] These young commanders were regarded by a Western observer as representing "a distinctly modern element whose recruitment, training and professional experience provide the basis for greater solidarity and a social and political orientation, which they share with the younger generation of the Ethiopian intelligentsia."[13]

Other groups of young officers were that of the Air Force, trained by a separate academy at Debra-Zeit,[14] and the graduates of the older but less prestigious academy of Holeta. (In fact, Holeta graduates would have a major role in the forthcoming revolution.) These majors and other junior officers, who apparently radiated a new spirit into the

rest of the army, were those who (together with NCOs) helped create the 1974 revolution. As they were later to demonstrate, they had the capability to exercise solidarity and organize themselves yet were far enough from the high ranks so as not to be integrated into the ruling establishment. Indeed, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, with the Ethiopian economy deteriorating rapidly and the political establishment preoccupied with intrigues, these officers stood a very remote chance of promotion.

To understand the significance of this group's emergence, one must examine personal loyalties as a cardinal factor in Ethiopian politics. Experts and advisers who spent years in the barracks of the Ethiopian army used to point out the social gap and the total lack of communication between the rank and file and the high-ranking officers.[15] Because the army was politically neutral, the class of generals and colonels (belonging to the agrarian or salaried elite) never tried to recruit politically or use those under their command. Furthermore, according to many of these advisers, who said that they themselves served as the actual link between the high-ranking officers and those below them, the generals and colonels were practically disconnected from the units under their command. On paper the army was made of divisions and brigades but in fact the basic unit was the battalion. Battalions of the same brigade were based in different provinces and were only administratively connected. The battalion commanders were often old officers approaching their retirement, and their main interest was evidently to exploit this last chance by taxing their soldiers, running entertainment businesses in the vicinity of the camp, and so on. (It was this class of officers that was the first to fall victim to the February 1974 protest movement.) The situation was entirely different with the new group of lieutenants, captains, and majors:[16] They were the real commanders of the battalion and its companies. They were in touch daily with the rank and file and were in a position to become their political leaders.

Many members of this new class of educated young officers were reported to be bitterly disappointed with Haile Selassie and the existing order. Their revolutionary spirit in the late 1960s was reflected in the words of a certain Major Ayahu, most probably a typical representative of this group, in a private conversation with an Israeli guest:[17]

> The peasants are degenerated from poverty and ignorance, the intelligentsia is oppressed and finished and the church is an ally of the emperor. There is one and only one element capable of bringing about a change—the army. Sooner or later we, the military, will do it. And when we do it this will be a revolution which will bring about a full and total change.
>
> This will be merciless revolution, many will fall, but this is the only way we can bring hope to the people. First we shall remove the emperor and with him all those who shared his way. Their property will be confiscated and returned to the people from whom it had been stolen. Land will be taken from the landlords and the Church and be distributed to the peasants. . . . We shall teach them collective farming . . . we shall develop and expand health services and education, and all the students will be called to go to the rural areas and teach the children how to read and write. We shall nationalize all the means of production.

In the 1960s these words evoked no echoes, no reverberations. In the early 1970s, however, they were tremors that presaged a political earthquake.

The "February Movement": A NCO-Led Protest—The Beginning of the 1974 Developments

It was not the radical officers who started the 1974 army intervention in Ethiopian politics but rather nonpolitical privates and NCOs[18] whose demands were far from reflecting the above-mentioned revolutionary ideas. Indeed their activities, though effectively destroying the army as the main pillar of the existing order, led to no significant political change. As will be described below, this group merely played into the hands of one of the factions within the ruling establishment.

The mutiny[19] began on January 12, 1974 in the town of Nagalle in Arrusi where the Fourth Brigade of the Fourth Division was posted. On February 25 the privates and NCOs of the Eritrea-based Second Division arrested their high-ranking officers, followed the next day by the Addis Ababa-based Fourth Division's various units and the Debra-Zeit airbase.[20] At the same time there were indications of internal instability in the Imperial guard, the main military support of

the regime in and around the capital, which apparently resulted in this unit being paralyzed as a factor in the ensuing events. The small Massawa-based naval forces forced their commander, the emperor's grandson Rear Adm. Iskander Dasta, to flee to Djibouti and later to Addis Ababa. It seemed that among the army's four divisions only the Third Division, centered in Harar, remained inactive at this stage.

Behind the NCOs' frustration was, among others, the fact that due to the inflation of 1973 the officers' monthly salaries were raised by E$ 200-230 free of tax (ministers were given an additional E$ 700), while they were compensated a mere E$ 7 to be added to their taxed salary. At this stage, therefore, their demands concerned pay, food, rising prices, internal disciplinary injustices, pension, injury benefits, food allowances, housing arrangements, and so forth—in short, the typical grievances of the rank and file in professional armies almost anywhere in the Third World but particularly in the Ethiopia of 1973-1974. A list of 22 demands made by the soldiers of the Asmara-based Second Division when they occupied the local radio station on February 28 included: raise in salaries, equal rights for privates as for officers and NCOs, equal participation in dangerous combat activities, proper burial arrangements for privates as well as for NCOs and officers, medical treatment for their families, and that ministers would not be issued luxurious Mercedes cars. This spirit of protest among the common soldiers and NCOs was quite rapidly—during the month of February 1974—to become the vital factor in the creation of the revolt within the army itself. Though the protest mainly concerned standard-of-living issues of the military sector alone, it was primarily directed against the military elite, which was an integral part of the Imperial regime and so immediately gained acute political significance. And when, as will be sketched below, the politically minded officers of intermediate ranks joined the protest movement, it was the beginning of a revolution.

But throughout February 1974 the movement of privates and NCOs was still far from clearly revolutionary, and in their petitions the rebelling groups emphasized time and again their loyalty to the emperor.[21] When the government under Prime Minister Aklilu Habta-Wald acceded to some of their demands, some of the units seemed to lose their momentum. On February 24 the government announced a concession to the soldiers—an increase of E$ 18 per month for privates. Following further disturbances in the above-mentioned divisions on February 27, the cabinet was forced to decide on a

further salary increase of E$ 90 and E$ 150 plus better allowances and pensions. Yet Aklilu's government was hardly in a position to contain the protesters. With the rapid erosion of discipline in the army, the hierarchical structure of the old regime was deprived of its backbone. Many of the high-ranking officers were arrested by the embittered soldiers.

It was in this situation that the Shoan nobility group, in a combined effort with the Exiles, managed to capitalize on the protest movement. While the wave of arrests by soldiers of high-ranking officers was renewed and demonstrating civilians dominated the streets of Addis Ababa, the emperor's ADC Lt. Gen. Assafa Demise (returning from Eritrea where he had met with Lt. Gen. Dabbab Haile-Mariam and negotiated with protesting soldiers) convinced Haile Selassie that "the army" wanted a change in government. The emperor was told that officers affiliated with members of the Shoan nobility could contain the protesters. Thus on February 27, 1974, Aklilu Habta-Wald resigned, later to be arrested together with almost all of his ministers by these officers. (They were released, however, on the emperor's personal intervention.) A new government under Lij Endalkatchaw Makonnen was sworn in with Abiy Ababa as Minister of Defence and Ras Asrate Kasa in the background. Western observers and indeed members of the new government were convinced that the ruling establishment might now regroup and contain the protesters. In fact, following this change some of the mutiny leaders of the Second Division sent a telegram on March 1 to all armed forces urging them to end the rebellion. In the first week of March, many of the units were apparently calming down.

However, retrospectively speaking, it was already more than a mere protest movement. Mutinous troops in the various units had established or were establishing during February their own "committees," which were to become the ruling bodies of the various units. In such committees the more educated and radical-minded NCOs and junior officers were gaining influential positions. In late February this was clearly the situation in the Debra-Zeit-based air force units (always considered to be politically led by educated young officers), in the Asmara-based Second Divison, and in the Fourth Division in the capital.[22]

March-June 1974: The Last Military Support of the Falling *Ancien Regime*

The immediate effect of the protest movement was to render the class of generals irrelevant to future political developments. Those who for one reason or another were not arrested by the organized troops preferred to keep a very low profile. The army was now led by "committees." One of these committees, composed of a few colonels and some junior officers, the majority from Division IV, was to play a pivotal role during the first half of 1974. It served as the last military support of the falling *ancien regime.* Later, as will be described below, some of its members would initiate the establishment of the revolutionary "Derg."

The capital-based NCOs committee centered on the Fourth Division was said to be led by thirty NCOs who claimed to represent each military unit in the country except the navy.[23] By late February the committee had apparently come under the influence of a group of intermediate officers, some of them politically motivated. This group was headed by a colonel named Alam-Zwad Tasamma, the commander of the Fourth Division's airborne brigade. Its other members were Col. Yigazu Yimane, the head of Army Aviation; Col. Atnafu Abate of the Fourth Division; Junior Aircraftsman Girma Fisseha; Lt. Col. Yilma Tshome of the Fourth Division; airman Lt. Col. Afawarq; Col. Fikru of the Fourth Division; and Capt. Demise Shiferaw of the Addis Ababa police. Some of these officers were rumored to be connected with the influential and most popular ex-officer, the Senate member Lt. Gen. Aman Mikael Andom. The leader of this group was Colonel Alam-Zawd, a native of the province of Gojjam and a relative of Lij Endalkatchaw Makonnen. Alam-Zawd was also associated with Assafa Demise (himself, like Endalkatchaw's family, also from Gojjam). Indeed, it was paratroopers sent by Alam-Zawd who arrested members of Aklilu's government and helped Assafa to "convince" the aging emperor to appoint Endalkatchaw.[24] During the subsequent four months the politically ambitious Colonel Alam-Zawd would play a most prominent role. He was to put himself in a pivotal position: As the leader of a committee of intermediate officers

he would exercise influence on the Addis Ababa-based protesting troops. At the same time he would become the source of the only military support to the new government of Endalkatchaw, Abiy and Ras Asrate.

In early March, however, following the establishment of Endalkatchaw's government, the committee under Alam-Zawd was undergoing changes. There was a split among its officers between those led by Alam-Zawd, Yigazu, and Girma Fisseha, who preferred to go along with the protest movement in order to build up their position within the existing establishment, and revolutionaries such as Atnafu Abate who were aiming at the total destruction of the existing order. Some of the NCOs, apparently disillusioned by Alam-Zawd's leadership, left the committee and joined their radical colleagues at Debra-Zeit. Although the officers, seemingly as a group remained in the capital, the split prevented them from adopting a clear and consistent policy. The next two months would see the old regime trying, with the aid of Alam-Zawd and his friends, to preserve the last vestiges of its authority, while the radical officers in this committee awaited the opportune moment to turn the collective power of the protest movement to the task of revolution.

The Failure of the Ancient Regime to Face the Protest Movement

Equipped with a new, projected constitution and with policy statements to which some observers referred as a "legal revoltuion," the New PM Endalkatchaw Makonnen's main task was to calm down the restive army and urban sectors and restore authority to the government.[25] Alam-Zawd and his associates were to play a prominent role in this effort. They were trying to appease the organized soldiers and to encourage the moderates among them in order to create in them the main support of the new policy and also the means of crushing the radicals. Alam-Zawd could be successful only as long as he could convince his followers among the capital-based solidiers that he was supporting a policy of real change and also aiming at punishing those responsible for such crimes as the neglect of the drought victims.

But even in this relatively short period of Alam-Zawd's leadership (March through May) Endalkatchaw was not in a position to solidify his government. Identified as a member of the Shoan nobility group, he was for the students and others a symbol of the older order. As early as March 1, just after he took office, they were shouting "Death to Aklilu, Endalkatchaw, Out!" On April 10, two days after he had proclaimed his new liberal policy, Endalkatchaw addressed the Parliament but was shouted down by the crowd demonstrating outside the house.

Two main issues contributed to public debate and unrest. The first, the projected constitution, concerned the future regime; the second was related to the past: the daily discoveries of the previous administration's corruption, especially over the issue of the Wallo disaster (where over 100,000 people had starved to death during 1973). Furthermore, Endalkatchaw and his associates, trying to gain a sweet revenge over "Aklilu's faction" and at the same time appease the protesting troops, allowed the press to publish daily disclosures of corruption of ex-ministers and administrators. The agrarian parliament, enjoying its revenge over the decaying centralism, was also fed with information to this effect.

The protest movement thus fomented by the new government was growing stronger. Throughout April students were intensifying their demonstrations, unrest was spreading in rural areas, workers were striking over the issue of corruption, and the army units became increasingly restive. In the first week of April even the hitherto passive soldiers of the Third Division temporarily captured the town of Harar, arrested their high-ranking commanders, and demanded the arrest of the ex-ministers.

Yet Endalkatchaw, Abiy, and Asrate, supportd by Alam-Zawd, deluded themselves that they were riding the protest movement safely. On April 23, 1974, Alam-Zawd's committee and the units under its influence arrested about 200 former ministers, generals, and other prominent officials, almost all of them known as rivals of the Shoan Nobility, including Aklilu and 19 ex-ministers.

This accomplished, Colonel Alam-Zawd appeared on the same day before journalists to declare that his committee was officially named the "Coordination Committee of the Armed Forces" and that the armed forces favored the peaceful change pursued by the government of Endalkatchaw. A week later, on April 30, a 25-man National Security Commission headed by Abiy Ababa and consisting of rep-

resentatives of "the army" and some civilians was established, and it was there that intensive operations against civil demonstrators and striking workers througout May and June were planned and carried out.

As for Emperor Haile Selassie, during the whole of this period (March through June) he could do no more than passively watch the activities of Endalkatchaw, Abiy, Asrate, and Alam-Zawd. The one step he did take would only have been meaningful if it had been taken a year earlier: On April 14, Haile-Selassie summoned the court dignitaries and proclaimed his grandson, the British-educated, twenty-year-old Prince Zar'a Ya'qub, as his acting heir. This act was supposed to be another victory for the Shoan nobility. Ras Asrate and his associates had always been for crowning Haile-Selassie's elder son, Maridazmach Asfa-Wasan. As Asfa-Wasan had become seriously ill they now preferred his son, Zar'a Ya'qub. Aklilu's group had opted on other princes, aiming at making one of them a future figurehead under their real power.

But these victories of the new ruling faction aided by Alam-Zawd's committee were totally out of step with the developing reality. The great majority of the organized troops, whose committees were coming gradually under the influence of revolutionary-minded junior and intermediate officers, were far from satisfied.

> Is it our sacrifice to replace Aklilu by Endalkatchaw? [read one of the pamphlets distributed among the soldiers]. Is this our aim? We are giving further opportunity to Colonels and Generals to use every possibility for themselves . . . at the sacrifice of the masses. There is no doubt that Aklilu and Endalkatchaw will be the first persons to be accused by the people and will be held responsible for thousands of people who died as a result of famine and starvation.

The most striking expression of the growing popular disaffection toward the regime was the huge demonstration of April 20, 1974. What was started as a demonstration organized by the leaders of Addis Ababa's Muslim community turned into the largest demonstration in Ethiopia's history with a crowd estimated at 100,000, the majority most probably students and other Christian Ethiopians. The slogans carried by the demonstrators calling for "equal rights for all Ethiopians" were apparently far from a mere demand for religious equality. The real significance of the event lies in that it was under the

cover of Islam—in the Ethiopian context, the philosophical antithesis to Ethiopian nationhood—that the masses preferred to express their bitterness and rejection of the decaying establishment. Such a demonstration, which would have been unthinkable a year ago, was to have indirect but practical consequences. According to one officer,[26] it was a clear warning to the militant officers and soldiers not to disregard or underestimate the (armed) masses of Addis Ababa. It was also the clearest possible sign for the radical officers and NCOs that these masses were really ripe for revolutionary changes. (A few days later, when a "Christian demonstration" was organized, it was practically a nonevent.)[27]

June: The Establishment of the "Derg" by Intermediate Officers—The Transformation of Protest Revolution

The Armed Forces Coordinating Committee under Alam-Zawd supported Endalkatchaw's government but, as already mentioned, included some revolutionary officers who were apparently waiting for the right moment for action. Meanwhile, those NCOs who during February had been cooperating with this committee and who were later disillusioned with the insignificant political change it brought about moved in early March to Debra-Zeit airbase to join their fellow revolutionaries. The committee they formed there, which included revolutionary officers such as Maj. Sisai Habte, kept in close touch with the student leaders and especially with leftist university lecturers. In a widespread leaflet campaign conducted by the airmen from helicopters, they called for rapid revolutionary changes, demanding direct popular elections, freedom of speech, and land reform. This was of great significance as it most probably encouraged the more militant officers in the Coordinating Committee, such as Atnafu Abate, to begin undermining the influence of Alam-Zawd.

However, the majority of the rest of the army units were not led by such determined groups. As power suddenly fell into their hands the various units were rapidly politicized, through the March-June period no further dramatic steps were taken. Torn by internal dissension

between revolutionary and less-committed members of the various committees, the army, now the only source of real power in the country, led by junior officers and NCOs, remained hesitant. Furthermore, the various units under committees were still far from fully coordinating their activities and thus were unable to influence directly the political developments in Addis Ababa. It would only be in June that those revolutionary members of the Coordinating Committee in opposition to Alam-Zawd would begin organizing the collective power of the committees by establishing the "Derg."

Meanwhile, however, Alam-Zawd forged his committee into the only body influential over such Addis Ababa-based units as the paratroopers. On March 25, 1974, authorized by Endalkatchaw and Abiy, Alam-Zawd led his paratroops to Debra-Zeit where a plot was allegedly laid by the local committee in coordination with the Committee of the Second Division's Second Brigade to bomb the capital and overthrow the government. The same day, Alam-Zawd's soldiers sized control over many key posts in Addis Ababa. This was followed by the arrest of 27 of their revolutionary colleagues known to have taken an active part in the February revolt. In response, the NCOs of the Asmara-based Second Division could do no more than temporarily reoccupy the local radio station and demand that the deposed ministers of Aklilu's cabinet be promptly brought before tribunals.

Alam-Zawd, though he managed to temporarily defeat the Debra-Zeit Committee, was not able to exert control over the capital-based soldiers, who were leaning ever more toward their more radical leaders. This was encouraged by the oppositional activities of the students, striking workers, and even by the published speeches in Parliament. Indeed, during the third week of March Alam-Zawd had to go to great lengths to persuade his men to act against the airmen. In fact, with the steadily growing strength of the popular protest movement, Alam-Zawd's revolutionary colleagues in the Coordinating Committee found themselves paradoxically helping to crush fellow-revolutionaries.

They were apparently further troubled by leaflets thrown from helicopters in early April by the radical young officers and NCOs still assembled in Debra-Zeit, in which their leader Alam-Zawd was described as "a jailor of revolutionaries." His associate, Junior Aircraftsman Girma Fiseha, was condemned as a CIA agent.[28] Those members of the Coordinating Committee who opposed Alam-Zawd's line were now actively working to gain control over the committee. A

primary subversive method was the spreading of rumors; chief among them was what came to be known as the issue of the "Congo group." It was rumored among the over 10,000 veterans of the 1960 UN Mission Force to The Congo (and even that of the early 1950s to Korea), the majority of whom were still serving in the Imperial Guard, that they had been cheated by the government. They were led to believe that UN salaries (U.S. $240 monthly comparing to their regular E$18) were higher and that their government had collected the rest of the money. Representatives of the Congo Group appealed to Endalkatchaw, who sent them to Abiy in the Ministry of Defense, where they were asked to allow time for an investigation. After a while the representatives turned directly to the emperor, who again asked Endalkatchaw to look into the matter. The issue became a source of much bitterness, especially in the bodyguard units, who naturally turned to the organized group of radical officers. Similar rumors, as well as threats, were spread among those known to be loyal to Colonel Alam-Zawd.

In early June the group of some 12 to 16 members of the Coordinating Committee, led by Atnafu, finally felt that the time was ripe to form their own committee and to take power into their own hands. Because the army was already being run by political committees in the various units, it was telegraphed from Addis Ababa to all the Battalions of the army's four divisions, the other branches of the army, the military academies, the Territorial Army, and the police—altogether 36 to 40 units—to send delegations of three men each to the headquarters of the Fourth Division in Addis Ababa. By mid-June this had been accomplished, and so the headquarters of the revolutionary soldiers was transferred from the isolated Debra-Zeit airbase to the capital itself.

In the meantime, while the more militant of the capital-based military leaders were secretly organizing, it seemed that the ambitious Endalkatchaw, supported by Alam-Zawd's men, became even more confident, and the old game of *Shum shir* (i.e., appointment and dismissal according to the principle of divide and rule) was resumed. The most important step in this context was the removal in the second week of May of Lt. Gen. Naga Tagene, the commander of the hitherto relatively well disciplined Third Division, and his transfer as governor to the province of Vagemdir. (Naga was also rumored to be in touch with leaders of the restive troops. Furthermore, he was known to be a friend of Aman Andom who, as already mentioned, was influential

among these leaders.) As Naga later showed his determination to fight against the Derg, this was, in retrospect, one of Endalkatchaw's biggest mistakes.

On June 26, a group of members of the Chamber of Deputies, headed by a certain Major Admase,[29] felt confident enough to march to the Fourth Division headquarters, probably unaware that military revolutionaries were already assembled there, and demanded the release of 25 of the detained ex-ministers, generals, and other top figures of the previous administration who had been arrested in late April. This demand was the last straw for the army representatives. Their response was nearly immediate: two days later, on June 28, Colonel Alam-Zawd had fled to his native province of Gojjam,[30] his paratroopers posted in Debra-Zeit having been defeated there by their radical opponents on June 22,[31] and troops were sent to take control of Radio Ethiopia, Ethiopia TV, and Radio Voice of the Gospel. Through these the people of Ethiopia learned of its new ruler, the "Coordinating Committee of the Ethiopian Armed Forces, Police and Territorial Army,"[32] otherwise known as "the Derg."

"The Derg" as a Collegial Body and the Revolution

With the establishment of the Coordinating Committee of the Ethiopian Armed Forces, Police and Territorial Army, popularly the Derg (i.e., people's committee, a word hitherto rarely used),[33] the first phase of the 1974 events ended and the revolution per se came into its own. Two things caused this shift: First, the emergence of the Derg as "a bunch of officers making history because they are cooperating and cutting across all the traditional political and ethnic divisions of Ethiopian society"[34] meant the practical end of the old hierarchical order. Second, since the old regime lost the mainstay of its military support, the Derg emerged as the only significant locus of centralist power, even though it did not officially take power until September, when it deposed Emperor Haile Selassie.

According to a booklet published on the first anniversary of the revolution every Derg member took an oath of office in which he also pledged "not to divulge any secrets."[35] This was so carefully adhered

to that to this day no first-hand account exists of the way in which the Derg was established and how it functioned. What is even more striking is that except for two of its leading members—Maj. Mangistu Haila-Hariam and Lt. Col. Afnafu Abate—its 120 members remained officially (though not in practice) anonymous till at least the end of 1975 (and this in a country used to a highly personified political system).[36] Indeed, the secretive spirit concerning the committee's internal structure and functions accorded well with Ethiopian political tradition. The new phenomenon was the self-imposed anonymity of the new leadership. This step was also intended to save the people, accustomed to the leadership of "great men," from the pain of seeing their leaders—particularly one thought of as semi-divine—suddenly disappear and be replaced by a group of young men of largely humble origins. The full and detailed story of how the Derg was established has still to be told by one of its makers. Nonetheless, from the available information a reasonably clear picture can be reconstructed.

It will be recalled that when the Addis Ababa officers headed by Atnafu decided to establish their own committee, which was to become the Derg itself, they made a list of some forty battalion units in the army, police, and Territorial Army. Each was instructed to send three representatives: one officer up to the rank of major (as was later explained, this was "to prevent people belonging to the class of *Mesafint,* princes, aristocracy, from infiltrating the Committee")[37] and two NCOs or privates.[38] Elections were held in various units. In many of them the committees established in February still existed. Of course, nobody could then have imagined that those who were elected as representatives were to become the new rulers of Ethiopia. Thus it came about in some cases that those who happened to be duty officers or duty NCOs were sent to the capital. The majority, however, were said to be selected according to the required criteria of "proven ability, progressive ideas, and loyalty to the welfare of the people and the country."[39]

According to a list of 114 Dreg members whose names and ranks were disclosed throughout 1974-1977,[40] only one colonel was elected to the Derg. The rest were: 8 lieutenant colonels, 26 majors, 23 captains, 17 lieutenants, 6 second lieutenants, 4 sergeant majors, 5 master sergeants, 7 sergeants, 13 corporals, 1 lance corporal, 1 leading technician, and 2 privates.

When more than a half of the expected delegates, the majority of whom were said to be from the Fourth and First divisions[41] (the

Imperial Guard), were assembled in the second or third week of June in the Fourth Division HQ at Addis Ababa, it must have been quite a confused occasion. Lieutenant Colonel Atnafu was apparently somewhat hesitant, for according to the available information it was the newly arrived Maj. Mangistu Haila-Marian (of the Third Division) who confidently gave a long and impressive speech; he was elected chairman of the committee on the spot, with Atnafu as Vice Chairman.

Major Mangistu was born in 1939 (1938?). His father, a native of Shoa (?), was said to have been a soldier who never rose above the rank of sergeant and lacked even an elementary education. Later he was a *Zabanya,* i.e., a warden and a servant in an important family in the capital (of *Dadjazmach* Kabada Tasamma). Mangistu's mother was a Sidama (?) from Wollamo. After a long period of military service Mangistu was sent to the Holeta Academy and then, as an officer in the Third Division, became commander of the Ordinance Company. There he gained a reputation as a tough but pragmatic leader and has long been active in a secret cell of officers.[42]

Lieutenant Colonel Atnafu was born to a wealthy Amhara family in the province of Gojjam and was said to be a relative of *Abuna* Tewoflos. He was commander of the heavy mortars company of the Fourth Division.

Among other prominent members were: Maj. Sisai Habte (a Gurage) of the air force (later a chairman of the Political Sub-Committee); Lt. Col. Asrat Dasta (later chairman of the Information and Public Relations Committee); Lt. Alamayhu Haile (later chairman of the Administrative Committee); Maj. Berhanu Bayeh (later chairman of the Legal Committee); Capt. Mogus Walda-Mikael (later chairman of the Economic Committee); Maj. Kiros Alamayhu (later chairman of the Development through Cooperation Campaign); and Maj. Nadaw Zakarias, an Amhara.

These officers were considered a nucleus of leadership in the Derg and were sometimes even referred to by observers as "a junta" or "an inner cabinet." Yet for reasons discussed below they by no means dominated the Committee.

Haile Selassie's regime (and to a lesser extent that of Ethiopian emperors from medieval times) was militarily supported by the loyalty of a certain central elite unit, the bodyguard, and the loyalty of the commanders of the various other units (or, before the postwar modernization of the army, the loyalty of the provincial warlords). One of

the main principles of the postwar imperial strategy with regard to domestic affairs was that the center was always to be capable of mobilizing enough military power to fight any of the many decentralist factors (especially as the latter were never able to unite and cooperate). The Ethiopian revolution, because it was led by junior officers, meant the destruction of the central authority in this military aspect as well.

The Derg's power, at least during the first year of its existence, was based on the loyalty of the battalions and had no central divisional unit on which to rely. This was of enormous significance. While the emperor dominated the army through the generals, the new ruling body was at least initially controlled from below by the rank and file and the young officers of the army's various units. Instead of the previous sole figure of Haile Selassie heading a pyramid of loyalties, the "Derg was like a hub of a wheel upheld by spokes, radiating from it to the battalions, brigades, military academies, air bases, etc.," which the Derg's various members represented. Thus in theory, every three members of the Derg were the representatives of a unit to whose committee they were answerable, and by which, through elections, they could and most probably were from time to time replaced. If a particular member of a group strongly disapproved of a certain decision,[43] nothing in principle could stop them from contacting their units and persuading the soldiers there, still led by a committee, to take an opposing stand. In this sense the Derg was, at least throughout 1974, substantially no more than a "Derg of Dergs." (Only in early 1975 did the Derg try to dismantle these committees. Some of them, however, survived longer, notably that of the Eritrean-based Division II.) Accordingly, no single member could muster outside military support that was sufficiently superior to his colleagues'. The most significant implication of this was the need for consensus on the major decisions of policymaking and ideology. This was most probably the main reason for the seemingly reluctant steps of the July-September period in search of a definite figurehead as a symbol of unity and respectability and toward the radicalism that would prevail from November 1974. Such radicalism was a natural consensus in the body of some 100 Ethiopian soldiers, around two-thirds of whom were privates and NCOs, one-third were young officers in their early thirties, and the majority of whom were said to be of Oromo origin.

Conclusion: The Building of a New Army and Its Implications

Instead of the previous authoritarian centralism built on the weakness of horizontal political ties, the 1974 developments created a collegial body built on newly proven organizational ability but lacking the leadership of an authoritative figure. Consequently the Derg, in which a consensus on matters of principle and higher policy was to prevail, was inclining steadily toward radicalism. This tendency was being strengthened throughout 1975 and 1976 with the formation of an even more leftist-oriented opposition in the capital. It consisted of students and other civil elements who had indirectly helped the army to power during 1974 only to find themselves later deprived of any real share in the revolutionary leadership. When, due to the ensuing massive return of exiles the oppositional EPRP was established, the Derg members started facing leftist opponents and a constant threat to their lives. Another group of Marxist civilians, the MEUSON, cooperated with the Derg until early 1977 in hopes of obtaining control over the revolution at a later stage. This in turn contributed to further radicalization in domestic affairs and widened the already existing gap between the leftist Addis Ababa and the more traditional periphery.

Worse than the lack of widely accepted central leadership, the 1974 revolution had completely destroyed Ethiopia's state machinery. The old politicians and administrators were either executed or arrested, while the fully politicized army, purged of the class of colonels and generals, was clearly unable to cope with the growing internal and external challenges.

Lacking both authoritarian leadership and an efficient military backbone, the Ethiopian state throughout the 1975-1977 period seemed about to disintegrate. It was only through the long, interwoven, and complex process of restoring both leadership and military that it would recover.

Authoritarian leadership was restored following a long and a brutal contest of elimination in the Derg, ending only in early 1977 with the Derg's destruction as a collegial body. Out of this bloody struggle, which claimed the lives of almost all the important establishers of the Derg, emerged Col. Mangistu Haila-Mariam as the undisputed leader of the ruling body.

This power struggle was closely influenced by the simultaneous process of building new armed forces. From the middle of 1975 new divisions were recruited and trained, as well as a small battalion-sized commando force in charge of the Derg's security. Later in the same year the construction of peasant militia forces in the provinces was initiated. The effort proved quite insignificant both politically and militarily (one such force was virtually massacred in May 1976 by the Eritrean separatists), but it prepared the ground for the creation of the future army. In April 1977, with massive help from the Soviets, the mobilization, intensive training, and political indoctrination of a centrally controlled peasant army began. At the end of the year Ethiopia's new armed forces were estimated to number some 100,000 regulars and 150,000 combat-ready militia men, plus some 400 Soviet-made tanks, 50 to 60 Mig 17s and Mig 21s, and thousands of artillery pieces and armored carriers.

It was essentially because Colonel Mangistu was able to initiate and inspect the building of these units, and because he managed to overcome Derg members and leftist civilians alike who attempted to control the process, that he emerged as the undisputed source of authority in Ethiopia. Moreover, with the construction of the new armed forces, already successful in defeating both the Somali invaders of 1977 and the Eritrean separatists, the revolutionary process that began in 1974 was completed. While the 1974 events had led to the destruction of the old order in Ethiopia, the 1977 creation of the new armed forces was the first stage in the reconstruction of Ethiopia's state machinery and in the stabilization of its revolution.

Afterword

Situated between Black Africa and the Muslim Middle East, Ethiopia has always been a unique political entity reflecting the values of a unique civilization. It is the author's opinion that the significance of its revolution may best be understood against the background of Ethiopia's own long history rather than through comparison with similar changes in other political communities. Yet for the subject at hand—namely the sociopolitical role of the military in the creation of the change—an analogy with some of Ethiopia's neighbors may prove useful.

By way of generalization, it seems that the role played by the Ethiopian armed forces was along Middle Eastern rather than African lines. Indeed, it was generally the case in the newly independent Black continent that intervention by the military in politics took the shape of coups de'etat rather than revolutions and resulted in mere political changes within the existing ruling establishments. (Cases in point are Zaire, 1965; Dahomey, 1965; Central African Republic, 1966; Togo, 1967; Upper Volta, 1967; Ghana, 1971; Niger, 1974; and Chad, 1975.) In general the phenomenon must be attributed to the creation of the contemporary upper class of officers in many African countries during the colonial period from native members of the colonial armed forces. Such officers played no role in the various African nationalist movements and subsequently emerged as a sector hardly keen on radical changes. (In some cases—Ghana, 1966; Mali, 1968—armies led by such officers intervened in politics and toppled radical regimes in favor of more conservative ones.) In fact, it seems that even today modern African armies are too small to serve as channels of rapid, politically significant social mobility. Yet there are signs that radical influences may be penetrating the postindependence armies. The establishment of some left-leaning military regimes in the late 1960s and 1970s, for instance, in Benin, Madagascar, and Congo-Brazzaville may well mark a change in this respect.

In contrast, modern Middle Eastern Arab armies, reestablished in the 1920, 1930s and 1940s as an integral part of nationalist efforts to regain independence for societies long accustomed to the political prominence of soldiers, generally played an entirely different sociopolitical role. In countries like Egypt, Iraq, and Syria the armed forces served prior to and after independence as the most effective channel of sociopolitical mobility, paving the way to power within the nationalist movements for colonels, majors, and other young representatives of emerging classes and ideologies (Egypt, 1952; Iraq, 1936 and 1958; Syria, 1949, 1961, 1962, and 1963; Yemen, 1962).

In Ethiopia the armed forces have always been a most effective channel of sociopolitical mobility. Similarly, the military has always played a pivotal role in national politics. (Indeed, prior to Haile Selassie's modernization, politicians were almost inevitably warlords.) What made the 1974 military intervention in politics the first revolution in Ethiopia's long history was the fact that, for reasons discussed in this article, it was conducted by majors, captains, sergeants, and commanders of companies, squads, and platoons, with all due implications for the nature of later developments.

Notes

1. On the Ethiopian army in politics during Haile Selassie's period, see among others: D. Levine, "The Military in Ethiopian Politics," in *The Military Intervenes,* ed. H. Bienen, (New York: 1968) pp. 5-34; J. Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity* (Oxford: 1974), pp. 252-59; R. Baker, "The Ethiopian Army and Political Stability," *Middle Eastern Studies* (1970), pp. 331-39 (hereafter *MES*).

2. In Levine's "The Military in Ethiopian Politics" we find the following data concerning the 1959-1960 graduating class of the Harar Military Academy: 53% Amhara, 26% Tigreans, 8% Galla; 13% failed to answer the relevant question. See also C. Clapham, "Ethiopia and Somalia," *Adelphi Paper* No. 93, p.7.

3. See also J. M. Cohen, "Ethiopia after Haile Selassie," *African Affairs* (October 1973).

4. See relevant accusations made against the high officers in *Ethiopian Herald,* 13 October 1974.

5. Levine, "The Military."

6. Mangistu was a major-general and commander of the bodyguard; his brother was a young member of the intelligentsia. For a detailed though one-sided description of the 1960 coup, see R. Greenfield, *Ethiopia: A New Political History* (London: 1965). Compare with Levine, "The Military."

7. Levine, "The Military."

8. D. Levine, *Ware and Gold* (Chicago: 1964), p. 190.

9. Markakis, *Ethiopia,* pp. 252-59.

10. See also R. Baker, "The Ethiopian Army."

11. See C. Legum, *Ethiopia: The Fall of Haile Selassie's Empire* (London: 1975), p. 34. Also, information obtained from Dr. Zawde Gabre-Sellassie.

12. Markakis, *Ethiopia,* p. 256.

13. Markakis, *Ethiopia,* p. 258.

14. The junior officers of the air force reportedly became radicals, probably because the better educated among the recruits were diverted to this branch. See also R. C. Hess, *Ethiopia: The Modernization of Autocracy,* p. 120.

15. The following passage is based on many interviews with ex-advisers to the Ethiopian army.

16. Two years before the revolution C. Clapham noted: "It does not follow that the armed forces would be united in a political crisis, or that they would automatically support the present regime, since there is a potential generational split between senior officers associated with the emperor and the large majority of junior officers from Colonel or even Brigadier-general level downwards, who have no special connections with the present regime." Clapham, "Ethiopia and Somalia," p. 7.

17. Ze'ev Levin: "Yediday haetyopim" ("My Friends the Ethiopians") *Ma'ariv,* 17 January 1975. The writer was invited as an observer to the African conference of the International Labour Organization. After discussing problems of Israeli collective farms with other colleagues, he was invited by a certain Ethiopian Captain Araya, aged twenty-five , to a clandestine meeting with two other young officers, Major Ayahu and Captain Mikael. Disguising their identity, they drove to a *Taj-bet* where, in a back room, they interrogated Mr. Levin about Israel's socialist experiments and told him

their views and thoughts about Ethiopia. Back in his hotel the writer summarized the meeting. In January 1975 he thought that the time was ripe to write about this episode.

18. See David Martin's interview with some NCOs in the *Observer,* 10 March 1974.

19. See details and descriptions in Legum, *Ethiopia: The Fall of Haile Selassie,* pp. 32, 33, 34; B. Thompson, *Ethiopia: The Country That Cut Off Its Head* (London: 1975), pp. 22, 23, 30.

20. Details in Legum, *Ethiopia: The Fall of Haile Selassie,* pp. 32-36; Thompson, *Ethiopia: The Country . . .,* pp. 22, 29, 30; *Observer,* 3 March 1974.

21. *Africa Confidential,* 22 March 1974.

22. Legum, *Ethiopia: The Fall of Haile Selassie,* p. 37, 42; Thompson, *Ethiopia: The Country . . .,* p. 34: *African Confidential,* 22 March 1974; *Observer,* 10 March 1974; *Washington Post,* 8 September 1974.

23. Martin in *Observer,* 10 March 1974.

24. Following Aklilu's resignation the emperor designated Abiy as the next premier, but he promptly changed his mind and chose Endalkatchaw. This change, according to Dr. Zawde Gebre-Sellassie, was due to Endalkatchaw's own initiative. He approached his brother-in-law, Colonel Yiagazu, and Colonel Alam-Zawd, who then sent soldiers to Assafa Demise (the emperor's ADC and also a Gojjami) to tell the emperor that "the army" prefers Endalkatchaw.

25. See an interview with Endalkatchaw, in *Ethiopian Head,* 14 March 1974.

26. *Le Monde,* 5-6 May 1974.

27. *Ethiopian Hearld,* 27 April 1974.

28. *Le Monde,* 5-6 May 1974.

29. Thompson, *Ethiopia: The Country . . .,* p. 70.

30. He surrendered himself to the Derg on 5 October 1974 and was executed with 23 other top-ranking officers on 23 November 1974.

31. *Reuter Sr,* 22 June 1974.

32. The Territorial Army is a kind of reserve army subordinate to the minister of interior, whose wartime establishment was estimated to be about 12,000 men organized in 12 battalions. Only a command and maintenance staff numbering around 400 men serve in peacetime. See other details in Baker, "The Ethiopian Army," pp. 331-39.

33. See the Amharic dictionary of Kaseta-Berhan Tassamma, Addis Ababa 1951 EC. It also means an even committee.

34. David Ottaway in *The Washington Post,* 8 September 1974.

35. *The Ethiopian Revolution: First Anniversary* (Addis Ababa: Berhanna Salam Press, 1975), pp. 9, 10.

36. A student in Addis Ababa told me that in the first days of July 1974 he heard people speaking of "Ato (Minister) Derg" as the new ruler.

37. *Yatigl me'raf* (Amharic) Addis Ababa 2 Maskarm (1968), EC p. 21.

38. According to another version, one NCO and one private.

39. *The Ethiopian Revolution,* p. 8.

40. The list is available from the author. It consists of the names of Derg members who were mentioned by the communication media throughout 1975. Other names were obtained from persons who preferred to remain anonymous. See, among others: *Ethiopian Herald,* 30 January 1975; 13, 27 May, 13 June, 9, 10, 17, 18, 31; July, 7, 8, 15, 16, 24 October, 7, 25 November; 21 December 1975; *IHT,* 30 December 1974; the *Sunday Times,* 22 September 1974.

41. According to one source the original Derg numbered 108 soldiers, among them 47 officers (Army—34; police and prison—8; Air Force—3; Navy—1; Territorial Army—1) and 61 NCOs and privates (Army—45; police and prison—10; Air Force—2; Navy—2; Territorial Army—2).

42. See *Addis Ababa,* 18 November 1974; *BBC,* 20 November 1974; *Ma'ariv,* 20 November 1974; *Sunday Times,* 1 December 1974; *Africa Confidential,* 6 December 1974; *IHT,* 23-24 December 1974.

43. There is very little reliable information on the decision making process in the Derg. It was said that in the beginning it was coordinated through an elected general committee with four subcommittees that were formed not only in order to deal with different subjects but also to help coordinate points of view between different units: Job Supervising, Information and People's Liaison, Policy and Guidance, and Discipline. But by September 1975 this structure had changed six times (*Yatigl Me'raf Amharic,* p. 23). According to other pieces of information the heads of these committees and other influential members, altogether around 15 officers, were permanent members of the Derg, while the rest of the members, representing the various units, were substituted every forty days.

44. According to information offered by Greenfield the Derg had been reduced by 1976 to 74 members, among them 27 officers. Of these, 5 were Eritreans, 4 were Tigreans, 8 were Gojjamies, 8 were Oromo, and 1 was Wallamo.

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