

PROFILE SERIES

ETHIOPIA

THE STATUS OF AMHARAS SINCE MAY 1991

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY.....	1
SCOPE OF THIS PROFILE	4
THE TRANSITION FROM MENGISTU TO THE EPRDF.....	6
STATUS OF AMHARAS IN THE POST-MENGISTU ERA.....	14
Continued Ethnic Fighting.....	17
The Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic Forces (COEDF).....	21
Haile Selassie Supporters.....	29
Members of the Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE), Police, Military, and Government Officials	32
Workers Party of Ethiopia	33
Police.....	35
Military.....	35
Conscripts	37
Officers and Career Soldiers	37
Mengistu Government Officials.....	38
Prosecution of WPE members, police, military, and government officials	39
ELECTIONS.....	41
Pre-Election Problems.....	42
Problems During the Elections	44
MAPS OF ETHIOPIA.....	46
APPENDIX A: ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION OF ETHIOPIA.....	51
INDEX	52

SUMMARY

In May 1991, the brutal Mengistu Haile Mariam government was overthrown. The new government formed by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a coalition of ethnic armies which had been largely formed to fight against the Mengistu government, came to power. The EPRDF allowed the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) to administer the territory of Eritrea¹ independently, and agreed that Eritrea could become an independent country contingent on a referendum scheduled for April 1993. Other ethnic secessionist movements were persuaded to remain within Ethiopia by offers of power-sharing within the government on an ethnic basis. Many exiles, including those loyal to Haile Selassie, the Emperor of Ethiopia who was deposed in the mid-1970s, are returning home.

By any standards, the Transitional Government² established by the EPRDF is a vast improvement over the Mengistu government. Freedom of expression, political participation, and rule of law are at a much higher level than during the Mengistu era. Despite strong hostility by

¹This paper will refer to the territory which was once the Italian colony of Eritrea, currently governed by the EPLF, as Eritrea. This reference is used for clarity only: the EPLF government in Eritrea has agreed not to declare its independence from Ethiopia until it holds a referendum on the issue in April 1993. The United States does not recognize Eritrea as an independent country, but does co-operate with the EPLF on such issues as negotiating the transit of food supplies.

²The Transitional Government was established at the July 1991 conference, and includes those parties which hold the 87 seats in the Council of Representatives. The EPRDF is by far the largest bloc within the Transitional Government. The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) controls 12 seats, while other parties control at most a few seats. The distinction between the Transitional Government and the EPRDF is not always clear. The EPRDF is by far the most influential element in the Transitional Government. Once the OLF had decided to boycott the June 1992 election, although the Transitional Government still existed, the Transitional Government's decisions were essentially those of the EPRDF. Where possible, this paper uses the term Transitional Government to refer to decisions made or endorsed by the member parties of the Council of Representatives, including the OLF, and uses the term EPRDF to refer to those decisions initiated solely or primarily by the EPRDF.

some Amharas to both their loss of control of power in Ethiopia, and to the EPRDF's decision to grant Eritrea its independence, the EPRDF does not appear to have retaliated against Amharas as a group. (The term Amhara is used in this paper to encompass not just ethnic Amharas, but also those who speak Amharic and identify with the concept of a unified, centralized Ethiopian state. See discussion below for more detail.)

However, Ethiopia continues to face major challenges, five of which could directly and seriously affect the status of Amharas in Ethiopia:

- * Since the EPRDF took power in May 1991, it has not always been willing or able to control ethnic fighting at a societal level. Amharas have died in ethnic fighting, particularly with Oromos, but also with other Ethiopian ethnic groups. At various times over the past year, ethnic fighting has broken out in most areas, including major cities, which Amharas share with other ethnic groups.
- * The coalition of Ethiopian political parties which is now grouped together as the Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic Forces (COEDF) has not recognized the right of the Transitional Government established by the EPRDF to rule Ethiopia. While the Transitional Government has been tolerant of those who leave the COEDF's member groups, it is not willing to negotiate with the COEDF. Most active COEDF members remain in exile. Armed resistance to the EPRDF continues in the Gondar and Gojjam regions, although it is not clear how much control the political parties affiliated with the COEDF have over their armed wings.
- * Human rights groups and the international community have been strongly critical of the Transitional Government's delay in trying former Mengistu government and military officials detained since May 1991. Human rights monitors are even more critical of the Transitional Government's decision to disenfranchise and otherwise restrict the political rights of members of Mengistu's political party, the Workers Party of Ethiopia. Because Amharas dominated these organizations, many of those disenfranchised or held in indefinite detention are Amharas.
- * When the EPLF assumed power in Eritrea, it summarily expelled Ethiopian soldiers, administrators, and even many Ethiopian citizens who had lived in Eritrea for decades. Many of those expelled were Amharas.
- * Although political conditions are far better than they were during the Mengistu era,

human rights monitors stress that serious problems remain unresolved: the June 1992 elections were seriously flawed, arbitrary executions, detentions, political killings and a widespread suspension of the judicial system continue to be problems. While these conditions affect other ethnic groups as well, they restrict the chances that Amharas will have reasonable access to legal avenues for redressing grievances listed above.

SCOPE OF THIS PROFILE

This profile addresses only the status of Amharas in Ethiopia, including those who were expelled from the territory of Eritrea. This focus was determined not because Amharas are, or are not, at greater risk in Ethiopia than other groups, such as the Oromo and the Afar. Rather, it was chosen because most Ethiopian claims for asylum in the United States are from applicants who describe themselves as Amhara.

The term Amhara encompasses not just the Amhara ethnic group, but also a broader category of Ethiopians who speak Amharic and who identify with the concept of a unified, centralized Ethiopian state. In the words of the former associate director of Africa Watch, Alex de Waal, Amharas comprise several groups:

One is the peasants of the northern regions. These people speak the Amharic language and have a cluster of cultural traits in common, including adherence to Orthodox Christianity, certain traditions of land tenure and social organization, and the use of certain agricultural technologies. Another group is the *neftnennya*, settlers in the southern regions who were closely associated with the land-owning, governing and military classes of the empire. A third category is the urbanized or government-related ruling class. Historically, these people have formed the core of an indigenous conquest state and have social attitudes to match. Many are assimilated from other ethnic groups, having "become Amhara" by adopting the Amharic language, Orthodox Christianity, and other cultural traits. These latter two categories formed the bulk of the army's officer class and the governmental bureaucracy.³

Many of those commonly described in the western press as Amharas, including former Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie, members of the military junta which overthrew Haile Selassie, and deposed Ethiopian ruler Mengistu Haile Mariam, were either of mixed ancestry, or not ethnic Amharas. For clarity, some scholars refer to those who speak Amharic, were assimilated through

³Alex de Waal, "Ethiopia: Transition to What?" *World Policy Journal*, Vol. IX, No. 4, Fall/Winter 1992, p. 728.

university education, or military or civil service, and identify with the dominant culture, as "Ethiopian nationalists," or "centralists." Although this paper uses the term Amhara, it does so in the broadest sense. Information in this report will be relevant to those who are not ethnic Amharas, but who might be identified by others as part of the old ruling elite because of their positions in the military or civil service, their opposition to Eritrea's separation from Ethiopia, or their opposition to the EPRDF's system of ethnic representation.⁴

⁴Alex de Waal, "Ethiopia: Transition to What?" *World Policy Journal*, Vol. IX, No. 4, Fall/Winter 1992, pp. 729-730. Christopher Clapham, *Transformation and Continuity in Revolutionary Ethiopia* (Oxford: Cambridge University Press, 1988). Rene Lefort, *Ethiopia: An Heretical Revolution?* (London: Zed Press, 1983).

THE TRANSITION FROM MENGISTU TO THE EPRDF

Ethiopia and Liberia are the only African states which were never formally colonized by European powers. Ethiopia has existed as an empire for over two thousand years, dominated primarily by the Amhara and Tigre ethnic groups. Since the late-19th century, an ethnic Shewan Amhara royalty, and those who assimilated into the dominant Amhara culture, largely controlled political and economic power. The social structure of Ethiopia was feudal, with a variety of land tenure systems in which nobility could demand tributes or taxes and labor from serfs. The system was particularly exploitative in southern Ethiopia where the nobility was essentially an occupying force not sharing the language or culture of the local population.⁵

Eritrea, colonized by Italy in 1890, was the only portion of Ethiopia to experience colonial rule. In 1935, fascist Italy defeated Ethiopia militarily and occupied the country until the British gained control in 1941-2, when Emperor Haile Selassie was returned to power. The British continued to rule Eritrea until 1952, when an autonomous Eritrean government in a federated union with Ethiopia governed the territory. This system remained in place until 1962, when the Eritrean assembly, many of whose members had been accused of accepting bribes, voted unanimously to turn Eritrea into a governorate. Eritrea's political party system was abolished, its relatively free press censored, Amharas were given most of the top administrative positions, and the principle of parity between Muslims and Christians ended. The secessionist Eritrean Liberation Front, formed in 1958 by Muslim separatists and joined soon after by

⁵Africa Watch, *Evil Days: 30 Years of War and Famine in Ethiopia* (New York: Human Rights Watch, September 1991), pp. 1-38. *Ethiopia: A Country Study*, Area Handbook Series (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), pp. 1-27.

Christians, turned to armed opposition to Ethiopian rule in 1961. The ELF remained the primary Eritrean opposition movement until 1970, when the breakaway Eritrean People's Liberation Front, initially more urban, intellectual, leftist and Christian than the ELF, gained ascendancy.⁶

The failure of the aging Ethiopian emperor, Haile Selassie, to halt the war in Eritrea, cope with prolonged drought and famine, or reform a grossly exploitative feudal system, led to a military coup in 1974. The new Ethiopian government, eventually headed by Major Mengistu Haile Mariam, embarked on an ambitious program of land redistribution and nationalization intended to completely restructure Ethiopian society.

Although the revolution was initially popular in southern Ethiopia, the former aristocratic class, wealthier peasants, and landlords in the north, opposed it. Widespread opposition to the Mengistu government formed within the first few years after the military coup. One source of opposition was from ethnic armies, including the Tigre People's Liberation Front, the Oromo Liberation Front, the Somali Abo Liberation Front, and the Afar Liberation Front. Another was from the political parties which were not explicitly ethnic-based, such as the Ethiopian Democratic Union and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party. Most of these ethnic and political parties were more committed to a socialist revolutionary philosophy than the Mengistu government, but opposed military rule or Mengistu's failure to accommodate the interests of those who had not assimilated into the dominant Amhara culture.

The failure of the Mengistu government to accommodate other ethnic groups, its early decision to oppose any form of federation or separation for Eritrea, and authoritarian forced

⁶Ethiopia: A Country Study, Area Handbook Series (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), pp. 40-50.

resettlements introduced in an attempt to alleviate famine increased opposition. Facing insurgencies in most regions of Ethiopia, the Mengistu government resorted to increasingly brutal repression. Prolonged drought and war contributed to a series of devastating famines in the mid- to late 1980s, which alienated many of those who had initially supported the Mengistu government's attempt to restructure society. By 1977, the EPLF controlled most of Eritrea except for the major cities and roads. The TPLF-led EPRDF was capturing territory from its stronghold in northeastern Ethiopia, and in southern Ethiopia, the OLF was also engaged in battles with government troops. The Ethiopian government eventually agreed to negotiate with the various ethnic armies in an attempt to reach some form of political settlement.

While the talks were scheduled, EPRDF troops moved closer to the capital and EPLF troops in Eritrea captured the few remaining cities under Ethiopian military control. On May 21, 1991, Mengistu fled Ethiopia for Zimbabwe, apparently without informing his closest associates. A caretaker government led by Tesfaye Gebre-Kidan, a former defense minister recently appointed Vice President, and Tesfaye Dinka, an ex-foreign minister appointed Prime Minister, released almost 200 political prisoners, and protected intact government security files containing information which is expected to help convict former Mengistu officials for human rights abuses and corruption.⁷

In a final attempt at negotiation, the EPRDF, the OLF, Prime Minister Tesfaye Dinka of the Mengistu government, and the EPLF met with United States Assistant Secretary of State

⁷Terrence Lyons, "The Transition in Ethiopia," *CSIS Notes* (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 27 August 1991), p. 3. "Who Controls Ethiopia's Destiny After Mengistu?" *Africa Report*, July-August 1991, Volume 36, #4, p. 5. Bob Levin, "Flight From Addis Ababa," *Maclean's*, June 3, 1991, Vol. 104, #22, p. 20-21.

Herman Cohen in London on May 27, 1991. Tesfaye Dinka attempted to include the COEDF, as one of the political forces in Ethiopia, in the negotiations. Although the United States did not specifically object to the COEDF's inclusion, it evidently accepted the EPRDF's resistance to this inclusion.

As the negotiations proceeded, Israel arranged to pay \$35 million into the Ethiopian treasury in exchange for an airlift to Israel of most of the remaining Ethiopian Jews, commonly referred to as Falasha. Meanwhile, the EPRDF's army moved closer to the Ethiopian capital. The United States "recommended" that the EPRDF enter the capital "in order to reduce uncertainties and eliminate tensions." With the EPRDF in control of the capital, the London talks concluded with a promise of a multi-party conference in July 1991. Many Ethiopian exiles who were not aligned with the EPRDF or other armed opposition groups strongly criticized the decision of the United States to accept the EPRDF's control of Ethiopia, which in their view abandoned attempts to reach a political settlement. The United States government maintains that the July 1991 conference in Addis Ababa constituted a political settlement, although not all Ethiopian parties participated in the conference.⁸

The first few months of the transition were tense. Many residents of Addis Ababa, most of whom are Amhara, were hostile toward the Tigrean-dominated EPRDF, which they viewed as an occupying army. In the first few months after the takeover, the EPRDF banned public demonstrations, citing the approximately 80,000 guns in the hands of the capital's residents as

⁸Terrence Lyons, "The Transition in Ethiopia," *CSIS Notes* (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 27 August 1991), pp. 4-5.

their justification.⁹ Amharas, mainly students and unemployed workers, in repeated defiance of this restriction, gathered in crowds, insulting the Tigreans, criticizing the United States for abandoning talks, and objecting to the EPRDF's decision to accept the EPLF's control over Eritrea. The EPRDF dispersed several of the demonstrations peaceably, but killed at least three people in one of the demonstrations.¹⁰

In general, the EPRDF's troops proved to be well-disciplined, restoring peace in the capital and in many parts of the Ethiopian countryside. They also proved far more pragmatic and conciliatory than the TPLF's history as a hardline Marxist organization led observers to expect, attempting to form alliances and coalitions instead of relying solely on force. In a key strategic move, they managed to form an alliance with the Oromo Liberation Front, with whom they had clashed militarily in the past. Oromos represent 40% of Ethiopia's population, and the OLF is the largest of the Oromo armies. Although relations between the OLF and the EPRDF have been extremely tense throughout the post-Mengistu period, the EPRDF has managed to avert civil war.

As promised at the end of the May 1991 peace talks, the EPRDF held a national conference in early July to elect an interim government (the Transitional Government, whose legislative body is the Council of Representatives), form a constitution, and set goals for local and national elections. The conference proved more broad-based, open, and productive than even the most optimistic observers expected. The COEDF and its affiliates, such as the EPRP and MEISON, however, were not represented at the conference. The EPRDF allocated itself 32

⁹Robert M. Press, "Ethiopia's Ruling Rebels Move Toward Open Political System," *Christian Science Monitor*, July 23, 1991, p. 5.

¹⁰John Bierman, "A Clouded Victory," *Maclean's*, June 10, 1991, Volume 104, #23, p. 26-27. "Who Controls

of the 87 seats in the Council of Representatives it created. It allocated 12 seats to the OLF, and the remainder to smaller ethnic and constituent-based parties (including one for university professors and one for workers), many of which were created immediately before the national conference convened. The conference was attended by representatives of every major and most minor Ethiopian ethnic groups, and both Muslims and Christians. There was general agreement on a secular state, national parliamentary elections within a short period, regional or ethnic self-government, and self-determination for those groups which decided by referendum to form a separate state.

As will be discussed in greater detail below, although conditions in Ethiopia in general continue to be fairly positive, problems related to human rights and political participation have not been fully resolved. Opposition political parties outside the government coalition have been allowed to form and to advocate positions -- such as reunification with Eritrea -- which the EPRDF does not support. Over 100 political parties formed in the first year following the coup, and demonstrations were held weekly in Addis Ababa by groups advocating a full range of political views.¹¹

Conditions leading to and during the June 1992 elections, however, were not completely conducive to open political participation. The OLF and some other parties in the governing coalition, and some parties which did not hold seats in the Council of Representatives, including the All-Amhara People's Organization (AAPO), boycotted the elections. They charged, with

Ethiopia's Destiny After Mengistu?" *Africa Report*, July-August 1991, Volume 36, #4, p. 6.

¹¹"Multi-party System Thriving, But Economic Doldrums in Ethiopia," *Agence France Presse*, 21 May 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database).

validity, that unresolved problems with the process (discussed in the section below on elections) made free and fair elections impossible. International observers agreed that the elections were severely flawed, although they disagreed on whether the problems were due to poor management and training of election officials, or to a deliberate attempt by the EPRDF to intimidate voters and manipulate results.

Immediately following the elections, the OLF withdrew from the coalition government and fighting broke out between the EPRDF and the OLF. The EPRDF's troops, better organized and equipped, easily defeated the OLF. The EPRDF set up camps to detain Oromos. An estimated 19,000 Oromos were still in detention at the end of 1992, including not just OLF fighters, but also children and the elderly. The EPRDF has announced no plans either to release or charge these detainees.¹²

In the months following the OLF's defeat, the EPRDF and OLF have agreed to try to negotiate a settlement through international mediators whereby the OLF can be reintegrated into the coalition government and elections can take place in those areas of Ethiopia where they were canceled in June 1992. A solution has not yet been reached. OLF members continue to reserve their right to secede, and object to the EPRDF's dominance over the national army, but the feared return to full-scale civil war has not taken place.

The OLF's primary interest appears to be persuading the EPRDF to agree that the June elections were fraudulent and hold them again. At present, while the government is willing to

¹²"Ethiopian President on Country's Democracy and Opposition Groups," British Broadcasting Corporation, 22 December 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). U.S. Department of State, "Ethiopia," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993), p. 86.

agree that the elections were flawed, and is planning to hold elections in areas where they were canceled, it does not appear willing to cancel the results of the June 1992 election. However, the Vice Minister of Internal Affairs, Kifle Gebre-Mehdin, expressed the EPRDF's desire to re-integrate the OLF into the governing coalition: "To some degree, they [the OLF] accommodate the interests of members of the Amhara-Oromo elite who feel removed from the political process."¹³

As of November 1992, Ethiopia's overall prospects seem fairly good. Make-up elections are being held in some of the regions where ethnic conflict prevented them in June 1992. In October 1992, the Transitional Government established by the EPRDF lifted remaining censorship laws. From a review of Foreign Broadcast Information Service reports, it is clear that the level of ethnic clashes in Ethiopia is at one of its lowest points since the coup, but there are unresolved issues which could continue to affect the human rights situation in Ethiopia. The OLF and some parties outside the governing coalition perceive the EPRDF as a single-party dictatorship. Some opposition groups continue to express concern that the EPRDF may drop its attempts to rule by consensus. Africa Watch and the widely respected Ethiopian Human Rights Council continue to report serious human right violations committed by the EPRDF, the OLF, and other political groups. These reports include arbitrary executions, detentions, political killings and a widespread suspension of the rule of law. Radio broadcasts continue to report violence against Amharas, as well as other ethnic groups, in rural areas. Although some violence

¹³Jennifer Parmelee, "Opposition Seeks Vote In Ethiopia," The Washington Post, 9 October 1992, p. A32 (as reported in NEXIS database). Jennifer Parmelee, "Ethiopia's Democratic Test; Stability Returns, but Power-Sharing Conflicts Persist," The Washington Post, 6 October 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). Edward Epstein, "World Insider," The San Francisco Chronicle, 12 November 1992 (as reported in NEXIS

is due to banditry, some appears to be ethnically motivated. Continued clashes in the Gojjam region indicate that remnants of the EPRP (discussed below) are still fighting.¹⁴

STATUS OF AMHARAS IN THE POST-MENGISTU ERA

Although the number of representatives allocated to each ethnic group in the new governing Council of Representatives reflected more their relative military strength than their percentage in the population, all ethnic groups, including Amharas, are represented in the Council of Representatives. In the first cabinet formed after the transition, there were four Amharas, including the Prime Minister, Tamarit Layne, six Oromos, three Tigreans, and three ministers from other ethnic groups in the 16-member cabinet.¹⁵ Although the ruling coalition appears to have a higher percentage of Christians than the approximately 50% in the general population, there are three people listed in the cabinet who are Muslim, and four more who are

database).

¹⁴"Ethiopia Opposition Radio Says Fighting Taking Place In Five Regions," British Broadcasting Corporation, 3 November 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Ethiopia Ends Four Decades Of Press Censorship," Reuters, 12 October 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). Jennifer Parmelee, "Opposition Seeks Vote In Ethiopia," *The Washington Post*, 9 October 1992, p. A32 (as reported in NEXIS database). Jennifer Parmelee, "Ethiopia's Democratic Test; Stability Returns, but Power-Sharing Conflicts Persist," *The Washington Post*, 6 October 1992, p. A16 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Hijackers Commandeer Ethiopian Airliner To Djibouti, Then Surrender," Associated Press, 5 September 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Ethiopian Elections Begin in Somali-populated South-Eastern Region," British Broadcasting Corporation, 7 September 1992 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] *Indexed Media Review*, Vol. IV, No. 10, Week of September 1 - September 7, 1992). Dede-Esi Amanor, "Ethiopia: Meles, Elected, Unites Opposition in Democracy Debate," Interpress Service, July 22, 1991. IRBDC, p. 31. Aidan Hartley, "Ethnic Feuds Resurface In Ethiopia Ahead Of Polls," Reuters, 25 May 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Ethiopia: Africa Watch Concerned About Human Right Abuses," Inter Press Service, 9 May 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database).

¹⁵"Apportionment of Seats in Representative Council," Unclassified Department of State Cable, from American Embassy, Addis Ababa, to Secretary of State, Washington, DC, 9 July 1991.

believed to be Muslim.¹⁶ The Indian Ocean Newsletter suggests that the EPRDF has created ethnic parties among the smaller ethnic groups and given them power out of proportion to their numbers in the population to prevent the elites of stronger and larger ethnic groups, particularly the Amharas and Oromos, from dominating the new government.¹⁷

Tensions between the Transitional Government established by the EPRDF, and Amharas -- in the broad sense of both ethnic Amharas and those who have assimilated into the formerly dominant Amhara culture -- stem from a variety of related issues. The Amhara culture has dominated Ethiopia for over a century, first under a feudal aristocracy and then under military dictatorship. For many Amharas, the transition from Mengistu to the EPRDF represents a much greater perceived loss of social stature and personal security than the 1974 Ethiopian revolution. Since the EPRDF took power in May 1991, there have been numerous reports of Amharas or Amharic speakers taunting EPRDF soldiers, calling them "provincial," "bushmen," or worse.¹⁸

Most Amharas also strongly disagree with the EPRDF's decision to allow Eritrea to break off into a separate country (pending a referendum). Those who assimilated into the dominant Ethiopian culture, Amhara-speakers and other Ethiopian "nationalists," view Ethiopia as a single nation that should not be broken apart. The EPRDF has for the most part been fairly tolerant of Amharas on these two issues -- problems adjusting to the EPRDF's accession to power and

¹⁶Telephone conversation with Paul Henze, RAND, 16 August 1991.

¹⁷"Ethiopia: Ethnic federalism," Indian Ocean Newsletter, 27 July 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] Indexed Media Review, Vol. II, No. 5, Week of July 30 - August 5, 1991, p. 45).

¹⁸"A Passage To Ethiopia; After Years of Civil War, Africa's Poorest Country Is Rediscovering Its Heritage," The Los Angeles Times, 19 July 1992, p. 17 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Ethiopia; The Empire Falls to Bits," The Economist, 11 April 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database).

Amhara opposition to Eritrean independence. Observers commented on the relatively high level of discipline and restraint displayed by EPRDF soldiers when they took over Ethiopia. The EPRDF tolerates Amhara-dominated political groups within its coalition, such as the Ethiopian Democratic Union and the Ethiopian National Democratic Organization, which continue to protest Eritrean secession. Furthermore, predominantly or exclusively Amhara political parties such as the All-Amhara People's Organization have been permitted to form, and groups with predominantly Amhara agendas, such as those calling for a return of the Amhara monarchy, are permitted to demonstrate and publish material. Serious flaws with the June 1992 election call into question the extent of these political rights. Nonetheless, the EPRDF itself does not appear to be targeting Amharas solely on the basis of their ethnicity.¹⁹

As mentioned in the introduction, however, there are serious unresolved political issues which do affect the status of Amharas in Ethiopia. Each of these -- ethnic clashes, continuing tensions between the COEDF and EPRDF, detention and disenfranchisement of former military, government and party officials of the Mengistu era, the expulsion of Ethiopians from Eritrea, and continuing deficiencies in the rule of law -- will be discussed in some detail below.

¹⁹Getachew Ghebre, "Honeymoon Over," *New African*, December 1991, p. 19. "Ethiopia: Majorities and Minorities," *Africa Confidential*, 12 July 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] *Indexed Media Review*, Vol. II, No. 2, Week of July 9-15, 1991). "Ethiopia: Opponents Turn Out In Thousands In Addis Ababa," *Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 12 October 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] *Indexed Media Review*, Vol. II, No. 16, Week of October 15-21, 1991). "New Ethiopian Government to Lift Half-Century Ban On Mass Demonstrations," Associated Press, 16 August 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] *Indexed Media Review*, Vol. II, No. 7, Week of August 13-19, 1991).

Continued Ethnic Fighting

Amharas are concentrated primarily in Addis Ababa and the north-west portion of central Ethiopia. However, as rulers of Ethiopia for more than a century, some Amharas have lived for generations in other areas of the country. The capital of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, while predominantly Amhara, is in a predominantly Oromo area. Furthermore, both the Ethiopian emperors and the Mengistu government relocated Amharas into ethnic Oromo areas of southern Ethiopia. Mengistu did so in part to severe drought conditions and insufficient arable land in traditionally Amhara areas. Amharas, therefore, are now an ethnic minority in many regions of the country.

In the post-Mengistu era, Amharas have been involved in ethnic clashes with various other ethnic groups. In the early days following the EPRDF's capture of Addis Ababa, the EPRDF killed a few Amhara demonstrators in the city. In an incident in January 1993, at least one student was killed in a demonstration reportedly organized by the All-Amhara People's organization. There have been few other documented reports of attacks by the EPRDF on ethnic Amharas, or clashes between Amharas and the EPRDF. (There have been clashes between the EPRDF and the now predominantly Amhara EPRP as a political/military group, as will be discussed below in the section on the COEDF.)²⁰

The EPRDF has attempted to pre-empt a number of potential conflicts between ethnic groups by introducing arrangements designed to protect minorities and compensate ethnic groups displaced by Eritrea's self-governance. The cities of Addis Ababa and Harar have been

²⁰Cameron McWhirter and Gur Melamede, "New Split Threatened in Ethiopia Rivalry Among Forces that Ousted Dictator," The San Francisco Chronicle, 22 August 1992, p. A12 (as reported in NEXIS database).

designated "chartered towns," in which minorities are guaranteed full legal protection, and towns in southern Ethiopia with Amhara minorities are also being given special status to protect all ethnic minorities. Although the EPRDF appears committed to these principles, it has not been able to enforce them except in Addis Ababa.²¹

The issue of whether Amharas could be moved out of areas where they are a minority into predominantly Amhara areas is one human rights monitors and the media have not discussed. Based on available evidence, however, internal relocation does not appear a realistic option at present. As mentioned above, the EPRDF's apparent strategy is to try to protect ethnic minorities through legal means rather than relocation. The Ethiopian government is currently trying to cope with an estimated 350,000 demobilized soldiers, several million refugees who have returned to Ethiopia since May 1991, Ethiopians who have already fled ethnic violence in various parts of Ethiopia, and drought conditions which international aid groups estimate could leave more than eight million Ethiopians at risk of starvation. Although the Ethiopian government has dropped many of its socialist goals, it has remained adamant on government control of land nationalized under Mengistu. Land is not, technically, available to anyone relocating within Ethiopia except through the government. The government is currently allocating land to returned refugees, but the program is far too small to meet current needs. Jobs for wages are extremely scarce in Ethiopia, and aid from external donors is not presently sufficient to meet the needs of the existing refugee population. Given these conditions, there would be no guarantee of survival for someone

²¹"Ethiopia: New Government, New Map," *Africa Confidential*, 8 November 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] *Indexed Media Review*, Vol. II, No. 20, Week of November 12-18, 1991).

attempting to relocate inside Ethiopia to escape ethnic violence.²²

There have been numerous clashes between Amharas and other ethnic groups, primarily but not exclusively the Oromos, since the May 1991 coup. (Ethnic clashes affecting other ethnic groups are also occurring, but are beyond the scope of this paper.) Although the number of clashes has dropped in the past few months, the tensions which led to such clashes have not been resolved. Some reports of clashes still occur, and conditions suggest that more widespread ethnic violence could flare up again. Below is a list (not exhaustive) of some of the typical reports of ethnic clashes which have involved Amharas:²³

- * In early January 1993, police fired on an unauthorized student demonstration reportedly organized by the All-Amhara People's Organization. Sources report that at least one and possibly four students were killed. The students were demonstrating against a United Nations-backed plan to conduct an independence referendum in Eritrea.²⁴

In May and June 1991, before the EPRDF lifted its ban on demonstrations, thousands of Amhara students and unemployed workers marched in protest outside the United States embassy protesting the American abandonment of the London peace talks and recognition of the EPRDF as the Ethiopian government. The EPRDF broke up two demonstrations peacefully, but killed several protesters in other demonstrations.²⁵

- * Fighting between Oromos and Amharas along religious and ethnic lines has led to a death toll of perhaps 500. In some incidents, the fighting appears to have been initiated by Oromos. In other incidents, fighting appears to have started when Amharas provoked

²²Jonathan Clayton, "Garden of Eden Offers Hope in Desert Misery," Reuters, 27 November 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Famine Threatens Eight Million in Ethiopia," Agence France Presse, 14 November 1991 (as reported in NEXIS database).

²³"Ethiopia Government Said To Be Losing Control Of South, East And West," British Broadcasting Corporation, 21 November 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database).

²⁴Robert M. Press, "Ethnic-Based Dissent Tests Ethiopia's Move to Democracy," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 21 January 1993, p. 7.

²⁵"Who Controls Ethiopia's Destiny After Mengistu?" *Africa Report*, July-August 1991, Volume 36, No. 4, p. 6.

Oromos with anti-Muslim or anti-Oromo slogans.²⁶

Sporadic fighting between Oromo and Amhara in the region of Dire Dawa in eastern Ethiopia has continued during much of the period since the EPRDF took power in May 1991. Muslim church leaders representing the Oromos, and Coptic church leaders representing Amharas, were only partially successful in calming the situation.²⁷

In the worst single incident, it was alleged that OLF members killed about 150 Amharas and other non-Oromos, including Tigreans, in eastern Ethiopia's Hararge province. The OLF admitted that its supporters were responsible for the massacre, but stated that the OLF had not planned or condoned the incident.²⁸

- * Issas in the border area near Eritrea and Djibouti, who as a predominantly Muslim group felt marginalized by both the Mengistu government and the EPRDF's Transitional Government, have attacked Amharas and Tigreans (both predominantly Coptic Christian). In one such incident, Issas stopped a public bus, separated all the Amharas and Tigreans from the rest of the passengers, and shot and killed all of the Amharas and Tigreans.²⁹
- * Eritrea summarily expelled many Ethiopians who have lived in Eritrea for as long as thirty years. While some were members of the Mengistu army or the Ethiopian government bureaucracy, some were private citizens. Many were told to leave with little notice, and were unable to sell property or arrange to bring possessions with them. Some wounded Mengistu army soldiers were trucked to the border and left. While many of

²⁶"Ethiopia Death Toll In Dire Dawa Rises; Religious Dimension Noted," British Broadcasting Corporation, 15 November 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] ~~Indexed Media Review~~, Vol. II, No. 20, Week of November 12-18, 1991). "Twenty Reportedly Killed in Ethnic Clashes," Agence-France Presse, 10 July 1991 (as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service [FBIS], ~~Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa~~, 11 July 1991, p. 6). "Ethiopia: Fifty Reported Dead in Amhara-Oromo Clashes in Dire Dawa," British Broadcasting Corporation, 14 November 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] ~~Indexed Media Review~~, Vol. II, No. 21, Week of November 19-25, 1991).

²⁷Jean-Pierre Campagne, "Ethiopia's Government Fails to Establish Control," Agence France Presse, 21 April 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Ethiopia Death Toll In Dire Dawa Rises; Religious Dimension Noted," British Broadcasting Corporation, 15 November 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] ~~Indexed Media Review~~, Vol. II, No. 20, Week of November 12-18, 1991).

²⁸"Oromos Massacre 150 in Ethiopia," Agence France Presse, 17 April 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). Africa Watch, "Ethiopia," ~~Human Rights Watch World Report 1993~~ (New York: Human Rights Watch, December 1992), pp. 12-13.

²⁹Getachew Ghebre, "Honeymoon Over," ~~New African~~, December 1991, p. 19.

those expelled were Amharas, other ethnic groups were also expelled.³⁰

The Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic Forces (COEDF)

The Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic Forces is a political umbrella group which was formed in the final days of the Mengistu era to unite a collection of political parties opposed both to the Mengistu government and to the EPRDF coalition. Although the COEDF is relatively new, most of the member parties of this coalition have existed since the mid-1970s. The differences between the philosophies of the EPRDF and the COEDF are for the most part not profound. Most of the member parties of the COEDF shared with the EPRDF a strong commitment to a hardline Marxist philosophy, which they also tempered in the final days of the Mengistu era. Most of the member parties are not ethnic based: the COEDF has been more skeptical than the EPRDF of the ultimate wisdom of ethnic-based parties. Although the EPRDF did not actually favor the EPLF's decision to declare Eritrea's independence, the COEDF is more actively opposed to the breakup of Ethiopia. While members of all of the major ethnic groups belong to both the EPRDF and the COEDF, Amharas appear to be over-represented in the COEDF, and are clearly under-represented in the EPRDF.³¹

Both the EPRDF and some COEDF-affiliated groups fought against the Mengistu government, but also battled each other. The EPRDF's army is far larger and more effective than the armies associated with COEDF member groups (primarily the EPRP). For the most part, the

³⁰Jane Perlez, "A New Chance for a Fractured Land," New York Times Sunday Magazine, 22 September 1991, p. 74.

³¹Africa Confidential, 3 May 1991, Volume 32, No. 9. "It Tolls For None," Africa Events, June 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] Indexed Media Review, Vol. II, No. 1, Week of July 2-8, 1991).

EPRDF has forcibly subdued areas in which COEDF-associated forces were fighting. There have, however, been sporadic battles between the EPRDF and COEDF-associated forces since July 1991, and these have not yet completely stopped in the Gondar and Gojjam regions. It is not clear at present how much control the exiled political wings of political parties such as the EPRP and MEISON have over their internal armed resistance movements.³²

According to the United States Department of State and Africa Watch, when the government of Sudan expelled approximately 20 refugees into Ethiopia in June 1992, the EPRDF separated four EPRP activists from the group, and has been keeping them in indefinite detention. Africa Watch and a media source also report that a few EPRP activists were detained in 1991, and are still being held.³³

The EPRDF's position is that, in fighting back against the EPRDF instead of surrendering, member groups affiliated with the COEDF in effect declared war on the EPRDF, and therefore should not be included in the new governing coalition. The COEDF's position is that the COEDF, EPRDF and the Mengistu government had been engaged in political negotiations when the EPRDF took over the capital by force, and that the EPRDF should not be permitted complete control to decide the structure of the new Ethiopian government simply because it has superior military force. COEDF-associated forces claim that they are willing to

³²"Ethiopia: Opposition Meeting in Paris," *Indian Ocean Newsletter*, No. 567, 20 March 1993, p. 3. U.S. Department of State, "Ethiopia," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993), p. 86.

³³"Eritrean Leader's Talks With Sudanese Leader; EPRP Banned From Sudan," British Broadcasting Corporation, 7 June 1991 (as reported in NEXIS database). U.S. Department of State, "Ethiopia," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993), p. 86. Africa Watch, "Ethiopia," *Human Rights Watch World Report 1993* (New York: Human Rights Watch, December 1992), pp. 12-13.

negotiate a cease-fire, but that the EPRDF refuses to negotiate and is attempting to subdue armies associated with COEDF-member groups by force. Armies associated with COEDF-member groups claim that they are afraid to stop fighting unconditionally because the EPRDF has committed human rights abuses, and appears to be trying to "destroy" such armies.³⁴

The COEDF did not participate in the national conference of July 1-5, 1991 to determine Ethiopia's future, and is not represented in the 87-person Council of Representatives created at the conference. The reasons cited for non-attendance are confusing. A statement by EPRDF leader Meles Zenawi appears to indicate that the EPRDF claimed that it had not invited the COEDF because it considered the COEDF to be at war with the EPRDF. The acting Ethiopian Ambassador to Canada, Debalke Melaku, stated that the EPRDF would have given a COEDF-member group, the EPRP, seats at the conference if they had agreed to surrender and hand over their weapons. Paul Henze at RAND confirms that such an offer, with this conditionality, was made. Africa Confidential also reported that the COEDF was invited and refused to attend because of the EPRDF's demand that it first surrender. COEDF member groups claim that they wanted to attend the conference, but that the EPRDF refused to issue them visas to return to the country to participate.³⁵

³⁴Press Release: "Despite EPRP's Call For Cease-fire the New Regime In Addis Ababa Continues to Intensify War," Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party, August 13, 1991. p. 1.

³⁵Africa Confidential, 12 July 1991, Vol. 32, No. 14. "Statement on the Addis Ababa Conference of July 1-5, 1991, Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic Forces (COEDF), P.O. Box 21307, Washington, DC 20009, July 6, 1991. Press Release: "Despite EPRP's Call For Cease-fire the New Regime In Addis Ababa Continues to Intensify War," Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party, August 13, 1991. p. 2. Anna Asimakopulos, "Ethnic Strife Plagues Ethiopia, Says Opposition," The Ottawa Citizen, 20 January 1992 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] Indexed Media Review, Vol. III, No. 3, Week of January 15-20, 1992). Telephone conversation with Paul Henze, RAND, August 16, 1991. "Interim Government President Gives News Conference," Addis Ababa, Voice of Ethiopia Network, 26 June 1991 (as reported in the Foreign

The fact that one of the conference participants was a group with roughly the same name as the COEDF, but which was not associated with either the COEDF or any of its member groups, indicates that the EPRDF may have been using its standard strategy of creating rival organizations to replace or compete with those which it finds uncooperative. The Tigre People's Democratic Movement, a Tigrean ethnic party which had been a member of the COEDF and claimed that it quit the COEDF specifically to be allowed to attend the July 1991 conference, alleged that it requested to be allowed to participate in the conference and was refused.³⁶ One of the groups that did or does belong to the COEDF coalition, the Ethiopian Democratic Union, was represented at the July 1991 conference by several of its most prominent members. It was not clear whether these members were officially representing the EDU, and if so whether the EDU left the COEDF to participate. There apparently was a split within the EDU, and a faction loyal to Mengesha Seyum participated in the July 1991 conference using the name EDU. The COEDF continues to claim that the EDU is still a member of the COEDF, the EPRDF that it is not.³⁷

The likelihood of resolution of the tensions between the EPRDF and the COEDF does not appear strong at this point. The vehemence with which the EPRDF attacks the COEDF in its

Broadcast Information Service [FBIS], *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 1 July 1991, pp. 10-11).

³⁶"Ethiopia: Majorities and Minorities," *Africa Confidential*, 12 July 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] *Indexed Media Review*, Vol. II, No. 2, Week of July 9-15, 1991).

³⁷"Interim Government President Gives News Conference," Addis Ababa, Voice of Ethiopia Network, 26 June 1991 (as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service [FBIS], *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 1 July 1991, pp. 10-11). Telephone conversation with Terrence Lyons, Brookings Institution, 5 August 1991. "Ethiopia: Majorities and Minorities," *Africa Confidential*, 12 July 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] *Indexed Media Review*, Vol. II, No. 2, Week of July 9-15, 1991). "Ethiopia: Multi-Party Conference To Be Held," *Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 29 June 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] *Indexed Media Review*, Vol. II, No. 1, Week of July 2-8, 1991). Terrence Lyons, "The Transition in Ethiopia," *CSIS Notes* (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 27 August 1991), p. 4.

official speeches and publications³⁸ is remarkable, both because the COEDF does not pose a serious military threat to the EPRDF, and because the EPRDF has demonstrated pragmatism and creativity in many of its attempts to resolve disputes with other political and military groups in Ethiopia. The EPRDF had originally reserved six seats at the National Conference for groups which had not yet formed by July 1991 or had not yet agreed to join the new coalition government. Some observers had predicted that at least some of those seats might be given to the COEDF in exchange for an end to the fighting in areas where armies associated with COEDF-affiliated parties were still operating. The seats were instead allocated to relatively obscure small ethnic parties.³⁹

There is little information available about how COEDF adherents who are not actually fighting the EPRDF would be treated if they returned to Ethiopia. The COEDF's member groups were either fighting the Mengistu government and the EPRDF in rural areas, or were in exile. Most COEDF members do not appear to be returning to Ethiopia voluntarily. According to the United States State Department, the COEDF and its affiliates, including the EPRP and MEISON, are "not free to organize in the country." As is mentioned below in the section on the EPRP, some EPRP members who were forcibly returned to Ethiopia are still being held in detention by the EPRDF.⁴⁰

³⁸See, for instance, "Where There's A Will, There's a Way!" *EPRDF News Bulletin*, Volume 1, No. 10, July 16, 1991, p. 1.

³⁹Press Release: Despite EPRP's Call For Cease-fire the New Regime In Addis Ababa Continues to Intensify War," Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party, August 13, 1991. p. 2.

⁴⁰"COEDF's Correspondence with EPRDF -- Transitional Council Continues," *COEDF News Highlights*, Volume I, Number 5, Published by the Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic Forces, P.O. Box 21307, Washington, DC, 20009, November 7, 1991, p. 1-2. U.S. Department of State, "Ethiopia," *Country Reports on Human Rights*

Below is a brief description of the major parties that belong to the COEDF. The COEDF claims that it has 37 member organizations, but did not provide a list:

- * The **Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party** was, according to Africa Watch, formed among students in the early 1970s.⁴¹ The EPRP was originally a non-ethnic Marxist-Leninist party which called for the immediate establishment of a provisional popular government in the wake of the 1974 revolution. During the "Red Terror" in the mid- to late 1970s, the Mengistu government virtually annihilated the EPRP, which had denounced Mengistu's junta as "fascist" and advocated forcible removal of his government. The EPRP's campaign to assassinate leaders in the Mengistu government, commonly referred to as the "White Terror," was destroyed. When it re-grouped in the mid-1980s, the EPRP concentrated on guerrilla warfare against the government. The EPRP has distanced itself from its Marxist lineage and now describes itself as a "multinational, democratic force."⁴²

In the early years after the Mengistu government took power, the EPRP and the TPLF (now the principle party in the EPRDF) cooperated closely with each other, but a split occurred which left the two bitter enemies who fought each other as well as Mengistu government troops.⁴³ The TPLF drove the EPRP out of the Tigre region by force in 1978.⁴⁴ After the EPRP resurrected an army in 1986, it was involved in clashes with the EPRDF. Up to the time this paper was prepared in December 1992, there have been continuous reports of sporadic fighting between the EPRDF and EPRP in the northern provinces in the Gondar and Gojjam region. The EPRP's army does not appear to be large -- reports estimate about 5,000 soldiers -- but the EPRDF does not appear able to completely defeat it militarily.⁴⁵ According to the Department of State, at least four

Practices for 1992 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993), p. 86.

⁴¹Letter from Holly Burkhalter, Africa Watch, to the Resource Information Center, 14 August 1991.

⁴²Canadian IRBDC database files, Information Request ETH1902, September 1, 1989, and Information Request ETH4635, April 10, 1990. Terrence Lyons, "The Transition in Ethiopia," *CSIS Notes* (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 27 August 1991), p. 4.

⁴³Letter received from the Ethiopian Co-Group, Amnesty International United States of America, August 1991. Getachew Ghebre, "Honeymoon Over," *New African*, December 1991, p. 19.

⁴⁴*Africa Confidential*, 31 May 1991, Vol. 32, No. 11.

⁴⁵"Ethiopia Government Said To Be Losing Control Of South, East And West," British Broadcasting Corporation, 21 November 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party Introduces Its Programme," British Broadcasting Corporation, 25 June 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). Anna Asimakopulos, "Ethnic Strife Plagues Ethiopia, Says Opposition," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 20 January 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). *Africa Confidential*, 14 June 1991, Vol. 32, No. 12. Andrew

EPRP members who were forcibly returned to Ethiopia from Sudan are being held in indefinite detention without charge.⁴⁶

The EPRP traditionally has commanded considerable support among young educated Amharas. Africa Watch notes that almost all students who attended university in Ethiopia have some past connection with the EPRP. The EPRDF is tolerant of those whose active support for the EPRP ended before July 1991. As a conciliatory gesture toward EPRP members, the EPRDF exhumed for a formal reburial the remains of thousands of students from the EPRP who were massacred in the 1970s. The EPRDF does not, however, appear tolerant of those who continued to be active in the EPRP organization after the July 1991 conference, even those who are not associated with the EPRP's military activities.

The EPRP continues to operate in exile, and apparently also clandestinely inside Ethiopia. Since October 1992, there have been broadcasts from a radio station in or near Ethiopia which appears to support the COEDF/EPRP coalition. The radio broadcasts report continued fighting in the South, East, and West of Ethiopia. Although the reports are not confirmed by information from other sources, they are an indication that the COEDF/EPRP continues to function as an opposition force.⁴⁷

- * The **All Ethiopian Socialist Movement**, usually referred to by the Amhara acronym MEISON, but also referred to as AESM, is a non-ethnic party which includes Amhara as well as other ethnic groups, particularly Oromos. MEISON was formed by student radicals in the 1970s, and supported the Mengistu government until 1977, when it went into opposition. Like most members of both the EPRDF and the COEDF, it has a long history as a hardline Marxist organization, but more recently favored a more western-style party system. MEISON opposes the EPRDF's decision to allow Eritreans to determine whether to become a separate country.⁴⁸

Lycett, "Factions Emerge," *New African*, September 1991, #288, p. 18.

⁴⁶"Eritrean Leader's Talks With Sudanese Leader; EPRP Banned From Sudan," British Broadcasting Corporation, 7 June 1991 (as reported in NEXIS database). U.S. Department of State, "Ethiopia," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993), p. 86.

⁴⁷"Ethiopia Government Said To Be Losing Control Of South, East And West," British Broadcasting Corporation, 21 November 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Ethiopia New Opposition Radio Heard on Moscow Radio Transmitter," British Broadcasting Corporation, 10 October 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). Letter from Holly Burkhalter, Africa Watch, August 14, 1991. Tsegaye Tadesse, "Ethiopia Ponders Grim Legacy Of 'Black Stalin,'" Reuters, 21 May 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). Maj. Gen. Nega Tegegne, "Ethiopia's Unresolved Civil War Threatens Red Sea Security," *International Media Corporation*, May 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database).

⁴⁸Terrence Lyons, "The Transition in Ethiopia," *CSIS Notes* (Washington: Center for Strategic and

- * The **Ethiopian Democratic Union** (EDU) was formed in London immediately after the Dergue deposed Haile Selassie. It originally was composed of former members of the landed Amhara aristocracy and elements loyal to Haile Selassie, and advocated the creation of a constitutional monarchy. In more recent years it has abandoned its royalist agenda in favor of a popular democratic government. It is the only major member of the COEDF coalition which has a history of a rightist or royalist, rather than Marxist, agenda.⁴⁹ As mentioned above, the current status of the EDU is not clear. There is a party in the EPRDF's governing coalition which is entitled the EDU and includes known members of the original EDU. However, a party which also identifies itself as the EDU continues to operate as a part of the COEDF's opposition forces. As with the EPRP, the COEDF-allied EDU has a small military wing, and appears still to be fighting the EPRDF in the Gondar region in northern Ethiopia.⁵⁰
- * The **Ethiopian People's Democratic Alliance** is an organization that was formed in exile in the United States. It supports a liberal democratic political system. The EPDA has no military force within Ethiopia.⁵¹ According to one source, some members of the EPDA, led by Derej Deressa, were opposed to the EPDA's decision to join COEDF, and left the COEDF coalition to participate in the EPRDF's Transitional Government.⁵²

Haile Selassie Supporters

From the early days of the EPRDF's accession to power, Meles Zenawi has attempted to gain cooperation from supporters and allies of the Haile Selassie government. Members of Haile Selassie's family and government were released from prison soon after the EPRDF gained control

International Studies, 27 August 1991), p. 4. ~~Africa Confidential~~, 3 May 1991, Vol. 32, No. 9.

⁴⁹~~Ethiopia: Country Profile~~ (Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center: Canada, April 1990), pp. 11, 49. IRBDC Response to Information Request ETH1902, 1 September 1989. Getachew Ghebre, "Honeymoon Over," ~~New African~~, December 1991, p. 19.

⁵⁰~~Africa Confidential~~, 14 June 1991, Vol. 32, No. 12. ~~Africa Confidential~~, April 1991.

⁵¹~~Ethiopia: Country Profile~~ (Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center: Canada, April 1990), p. 49.

⁵²"Ethiopia: Multi-Party Conference To Be Held," ~~Indian Ocean Newsletter~~, 29 June 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] ~~Indexed Media Review~~, Vol. II, No. 1, Week of July 2-8, 1991).

of Addis Ababa.⁵³ Several member groups of the EPRDF's Transitional Government were once allied with Haile Selassie. The faction of the Ethiopian Democratic Union which is represented in the Council of Representatives, while apparently no longer royalist in ideology, contains many former Haile Selassie supporters.⁵⁴ In February of 1992, the Transitional Government exhumed what is widely believed to be the body of Emperor Haile Selassie from beneath the floor of a latrine in the royal palace, where he had been buried by Mengistu government officials in 1975. Also exhumed were the bodies of over 60 former ministers and military officials of the Haile Selassie government.⁵⁵

There has been some tension between royalists and the EPRDF over whether Haile Selassie was to be given an official state burial on the 100th anniversary of his birth, on July 23, 1992. Ultimately the government decided to allow the funeral to take place, and to permit the family to invite foreign dignitaries, but not to make the funeral an official state burial. Royalists decided to have a funeral on July 23, 1992, for those former ministers, military officials, family members, and the Orthodox church patriarch, who were killed by Mengistu. Some foreign diplomats attended the ceremony, and many Haile Selassie supporters returned from exile to attend the ceremony, held in Addis Ababa's Orthodox Trinity Cathedral. Royalists claim, however, that they will not hold a funeral for Haile Selassie himself until the EPRDF agrees to

⁵³"Haile Selassie's Son to Return for Emperor's Funeral," Agence France Presse, 5 April 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database).

⁵⁴Ethiopia: Country Profile (Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center: Canada, April 1990), pp. 11, 49. IRBDC Response to Information Request ETH1902, 1 September 1989.

⁵⁵"Excavation fails to turn up body of Haile Selassie," Agence France Presse, 15 February 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Haile Selassie's Remains Found," Facts on File World News Digest, 2 April 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database.)

make it an official state funeral. There is no indication at present that the EPRDF is willing to do so.⁵⁶

Haile Selassie supporters and monarchists are represented primarily by a political party formed recently in the United States, Moa Anbessa (Amhara for "The Lion of Judah," one of Haile Selassie's titles). There is some tension within Moa Anbessa over succession issues. In the early days following the EPRDF coup, Haile Selassie's son, Ahma Selassie, who crowned himself king in exile in 1988, appeared the likely contender. However, Ahma Selassie, estimated to be in his mid- to late 70s, is in poor health, and some Moa Anbessa members favor backing one of Haile Selassie's grandchildren as Ethiopia's emperor.⁵⁷

There is some tension between the EPRDF and Moa Anbessa over government policy. As mentioned above, Moa Anbessa resents the EPRDF's decision not to give Haile Selassie a state burial, and to treat Ahma Selassie and other relatives of Haile Selassie as private citizens. Moa Anbessa is opposed to the EPRDF's decision to allow Eritrea to determine whether it will

⁵⁶"Rastafarians Mark Haile Selassie's Coronation," Reuters, 2 November 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Funerals Take Place 18 Years After Ethiopian Officials Executed," Agence France Presse, 27 July 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). Tsegaye Taddese, "Executed Selassie Grandsons, Officials, Reburied," Reuters, 27 July 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). Sam Kiley, "Africa's Opposition Heroes Lose Their Way," *The Times* (UK), 23 July 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Leaders Back UN on Cyprus," *The Times* (UK), 22 June 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Ethiopia Says No State Reburial for Emperor," Reuters, 20 June 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Long Live The King," *Africa News*, 8 June 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). Aidan Hartley, "Ethiopia to Bury Emperor -- Rastas Say He's Alive," Reuters, 18 May 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database).

⁵⁷Sources differ on Ahma Selassie's age -- most report it as being between 75 and 78. Cameron McWhirter and Gur Melamede, "Ethiopians Look to Imperial Exile In Virginia For Country's Salvation," *The Washington Times*, 25 July 1992, p. A6. Richard Dowden, "Ethiopia's King of Kings Finds No Resting Place," *The Independent*, 22 July 1992, p. 12 (as reported in NEXIS database). Aidan Hartley, "Ethiopia to Bury Emperor -- Rastas Say He's Alive," Reuters, 18 May 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "NewsBriefs," The Associated Press, 11 May 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Pro-Monarchy Demonstration Held in Addis Ababa," Xinhua News Agency, 10 May 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "The Craving for Kings," *The Economist*, 25 April 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Haile Selassie's Son to Return For Emperor's Funeral,"

become a separate country, and the EPRDF's decision to establish a political system based on ethnic representation. Moa Anbessa maintains that a constitutional monarchy is the best system for Ethiopia; however, Moa Anbessa supporters continue to state that they are committed to democracy and will abide by the wishes of the Ethiopian people. There is no indication that Moa Anbessa would resort to military force to gain power, or that the EPRDF considers the group to be a security threat. Moa Anbessa supporters regularly demonstrate in favor of their position in the streets of the capital. A May 1992 report cited a peaceful demonstration of about 3,000 monarchists. Although Moa Anbessa is not represented in the Council of Representatives, it operates freely in Ethiopia and claims to have a following of three million, mostly Amharas.⁵⁸

Members of the Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE), Police, Military, and Government Officials

At the end of the Mengistu era, the new EPRDF government had to make decisions about how to deal with three overlapping categories of people associated with the old regime: government employees, military personnel, and members of Mengistu's sole political party, the Workers Party of Ethiopia. For lack of trained staff, the EPRDF retained many former government employees to continue to administer programs. Only officials of the Ministry of Information -- government journalists and broadcasters, for instance -- were completely replaced.

Agence France Presse, 5 April 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database).

⁵⁸"Monarchists Split on Late Emperor's 100th Birthday," Associated Press, 23 July 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Haile Selassie's Son to Return for Emperor's Funeral," Agence France Presse, 5 April 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Ethiopian Emperor-in-Exile Vows to Return Home," Japan Economic Newswire, 15 February 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Ethiopian Emperor-in-Exile Plans To Go Home," Agence France Presse, 14 February 1992 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] *Indexed Media Review*, Vol. III, No. 7, Week of February 11-17, 1992).

In all, only about 300 people from a civil service of 200,000 had been dismissed during the Transitional Government's first year in power. Amharas and those who have assimilated into the Amhara culture are, according to Alex de Waal of Africa Watch, "grossly over-represented" in the bureaucracy. There have been reports more recently that far greater numbers of career civil servants are being dismissed. There is not yet any concrete evidence that Amharas are being targeted, that they are being replaced by Tigreans, or that the dismissals have any significance beyond an attempt to cut an admittedly bloated bureaucracy.⁵⁹

For the most part, foreign observers agree that officials carried over from the Mengistu era have proven conscientious and efficient in their work. To those who fled Ethiopia during the Mengistu era, however, there may be a sense that the official bureaucracy has undergone few changes.⁶⁰

Far greater changes have been made in other areas. The Workers Party of Ethiopia was abolished, top level Mengistu government officials dismissed, all Mengistu era police were relieved of their positions, and the Mengistu army disbanded. Most of the top level people from these agencies have been detained since May 1991, and estimates of the number of people still being detained are over 2,000. None of these people, however notorious in reputation, has been executed, subjected to a show trial, or deliberately tortured while in prison. Africa Watch reports that despite overcrowding and inadequate food, the treatment of detainees is "extremely good" by

⁵⁹Alex de Waal, "Ethiopia: Transition to What?" *World Policy Journal*, Vol. IX, No. 4, Fall/Winter 1992, p. 723.

⁶⁰Robert Press, "Ethiopia's Ruling Rebels Move Toward Open Political System," *Christian Science Monitor*, 23 July 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] *Indexed Media Review*, Vol. II, No. 3, Week of July 16-22, 1991). Africa Watch, "Ethiopia: Waiting for Justice: Shortcomings in Establishing the Rule of Law" (New York: The Africa Watch Committee, 8 May 1992), Volume IV, Issue No. 7, pp. 10-11.

international standards, with no reports of deliberate abuse. The International Committee of the Red Cross and family members of prisoners are allowed to visit prisoners, and there are no reports that families of those in detention have been detained, mistreated, or deprived of civil rights by the Transitional Government. Most international observers agree that fair trials must be conducted to determine which members of these organizations were guilty of gross human rights abuses during the Mengistu era. In September 1992, the Transitional Government announced the name of the special prosecutor it had appointed, but trials had not yet begun as of the end of January 1993. These trials will be a major test of the government's respect for the rule of law.⁶¹

Workers Party of Ethiopia

All former members of the Worker's Party of Ethiopia have been denied certain civil and political rights. Despite a promise made by the EPRDF, former members of the WPE were not allowed to participate in the national conference which determined Ethiopia's interim government, the Council of Representatives. Former WPE members are not allowed to vote or to stand in elections, are excluded from serving as judges, and have some restrictions placed on their ability to travel. These prohibitions extend to all WPE members, even those whom the Transitional Government has no plans to try for their conduct during the Mengistu era. Africa Watch "believes that the denial of civil rights to a category of people on sole basis of their

⁶¹"Ousted Marxists To Be Tried For War Crimes," The Associated Press, 3 September 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Mengistu's Officials Will Be Put On Trial," *The Times* (UK), 3 September 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). Terrence Lyons, "The Transition in Ethiopia," *CSIS Notes*, (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 27 August 1991), p. 6. Africa Watch, "Ethiopia: Waiting for Justice: Shortcomings in Establishing the Rule of Law" (New York: The Africa Watch Committee, 8 May 1992), Volume IV, Issue No. 7, p. 16.

membership of the WPE is not justifiable. Former WPE members should be held accountable solely on the basis of individual criminal acts." The Transitional Government has stated that the democratically elected assembly which will determine Ethiopia's permanent constitution may restore basic civil rights to WPE members, but appears to consider this a discretionary option.⁶²

No one appears to have compiled an estimate of the number of WPE officials detained at the end of the Mengistu era; judging from statistics for some individual regions, the total was probably over 10,000. A high percentage of these officials have either been "rehabilitated" and released, or were amnestied at the decision of their local communities. One community, for instance, reported that they were granting amnesty to 2,088 WPE members but holding over 300 more to be charged and tried.⁶³ There is no question that some WPE members should stand trial for crimes, including systematic looting, corruption, and serious human rights abuses, they are believed to have committed. The concern is that they are being held in poor conditions, that they have already been held in detention for well over a year and have not yet even been charged, and that it is not certain that they will receive a fair trial.⁶⁴

⁶²Terrence Lyons, "The Transition in Ethiopia," *CSIS Notes* (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 27 August 1991), p. 6. Africa Watch, "Ethiopia: Waiting for Justice: Shortcomings in Establishing the Rule of Law" (New York: The Africa Watch Committee, 8 May 1992), Volume IV, Issue No. 7, p. 11. "Ethiopia: Holding the Centre," *Africa Confidential*, 14 June 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] *Indexed Media Review*, Vol. II, No. 1, Week of July 2-8, 1991).

⁶³"Ethiopia: 2,088 WPE members released from detention in Welega and Shewa regions," London, British Broadcasting Corporation, 17 July 1991, p. ME/1126/B/1.

⁶⁴"Ethiopia Pledges Democracy," *Washington Post*, 11 June 1991. "Ethiopia Committees to Investigate Corruption in Workplaces to be Set Up," London, British Broadcasting Corporation, 6 August 1991 (as reported in NEXIS database). "More than 800 Freed in Ethiopia," Agence France Presse, 20 October 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] *Indexed Media Review*, Vol. II, No. 16, Week of October 15-21, 1991).

Police

Dismantling the police and military system of the Mengistu era has been fraught with problems. Most of the police force was simply dismissed, and replaced temporarily by EPRDF soldiers. Most police had not been paid in the final days of the Mengistu era, and have been unable to find work. Given the easy availability of weapons in Ethiopia, there is a real danger that they could resort to banditry to feed themselves. Few, however, appear to have been detained.⁶⁵

Military

Mengistu's army was one of the largest in Africa with about 400,000 on active duty by the end of the war. It was also one of the most severely affected by war: according to one source, about 300,000 soldiers died in battle from 1974 to the end of 1990, and an additional 230,000 in the period from January to May 1991. Almost all non-commissioned soldiers were conscripted, and by the end of the war most foot soldiers were 13 to 15 years old.⁶⁶

Mengistu's defeated army was treated brutally by the Eritrean EPLF. Officers who had fled Eritrea for Sudan and were returned to the EPRDF in late July 1991 by the Sudanese government reported that around 2,000 soldiers had been killed by the EPLF after surrendering near Asmara. The EPLF allegedly killed another 2,000 near the Sudanese border. The EPLF has

⁶⁵"Ethiopian Former Police Demonstrate Against Non-Payment Of Salaries," British Broadcasting Corporation, 11 November 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] ~~Indexed Media Review~~, Vol. II, No. 19, Week of November 3-11, 1991).

⁶⁶"550,000 Ethiopian Troops Died In War, Official Says," ~~Toronto Star~~, 24 September 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] ~~Indexed Media Review~~, Vol. II, No. 13, Week of September 24-30, 1991).

denied these allegations.⁶⁷ The EPLF summarily expelled about 250,000 Ethiopians, most of them soldiers and their families, to the internal border between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Among those expelled were soldiers who were wounded, some severely. The EPLF made no provisions for feeding the soldiers or transporting them to their home regions, and most walked home in various stages of malnourishment. International relief agencies did provide some aid once alerted to the situation.⁶⁸

Conscripts

Most former conscripts of the Mengistu army spent about 3 months or less in "rehabilitation" camps before being sent home. Those who have a certificate from a re-education center are eligible to vote and to participate freely in the political process. The main concern about ex-conscripts is that few provisions have been made to find them employment or land to farm. The Transitional Government made some effort to provide them with seeds and tools, or job training, but its resources are severely limited. Dismissed soldiers were given the equivalent of \$65 and food from the Red Cross which lasted a few months, and most had to walk to their home villages.⁶⁹ The easy availability of weapons, and the general lack of training, education or

⁶⁷"Ethiopia: EPLF accused of massacring POWs," *Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 3 August 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] *Indexed Media Review*, Vol. II, No. 7, Week of August 13-19, 1991).

⁶⁸"Ethiopia Frees 65,000 Mengistu Soldiers," *Agence France Presse*, 14 October 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] *Indexed Media Review*, Vol. II, No. 15, Week of October 8-14, 1991). Shewayilma Kidane F., "Readers Letters," *New African*, December 1991, p. 43.

⁶⁹Robert Press, "Ethiopia's Army Is Walking Home," *Christian Science Monitor*, 5 August 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] *Indexed Media Review*, Vol. II, No. 5, Week of July 30 - August 5, 1991).

opportunities for this group, leaves the real threat that they may resort to violence, either banditry or joining armies opposed to the EPRDF. There are already credible reports that Oromos from the disbanded Mengistu army have joined the OLF and other Oromo militaries and are fighting against the EPRDF.⁷⁰

Officers and Career Soldiers

Nearly half of the Mengistu army was detained for up to six months in about 24 camps throughout Ethiopia, but officers and career soldiers were held in detention longer than conscripts, for "re-education." There were reports in October 1991 that 65,000 were freed, and other reports of releases at various times. As with conscripts, those who have gone through the camps and are released have the right to vote, hold office and other civil rights denied to many former WPE officials.⁷¹ There is no exact figure available on the number of officers still in detention, but the estimate of the total number of detainees from the Mengistu era, both civilian and military, is over 2,000. According to most sources, those still being held in detention are being held in poor conditions, with insufficient food, and no shelter from sun and rain. Although they have been detained for well over a year without being charged with a specific crime, there

⁷⁰"Meeting Held on Election of Neighbourhood Administrations in Walega," British Broadcasting Corporation, 11 May 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). Jean-Pierre Campagne, "Ethiopia's Government Fails to Establish Control," Agence France Presse, 21 April 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). Jane Perlez, "A New Chance for a Fractured Land," *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, 22 September 1991, p. 56.

⁷¹"Ethiopia Frees 65,000 Mengistu Soldiers," Agence France Presse, 14 October 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] *Indexed Media Review*, Vol. II, No. 15, Week of October 8-14, 1991). Jane Perlez, "A New Chance for a Fractured Land," *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, 22 September 1991, p. 50.

have been no reports of torture or other deliberate cruelty toward the detainees.⁷²

Mengistu Government Officials

In addition to WPE members and military officers, the Transitional Government is detaining several hundred top Mengistu government officials. These include former Vice President Fisseha Desta, ex-Premier Fikre Selassie Wogderess, and Public Security Minister Tesfaye Wolde Selassie. Most of these officials made no attempt to escape the country when Mengistu left, and the Public Security Minister guarded his security files, crucial for convicting top Mengistu officials, and handed them over intact to the EPRDF. As with military officers, government officials are being held in poor conditions with insufficient food, but there are no reports of deliberate abuse.⁷³

Prosecution of WPE members, police, military, and government officials

After its first few months in power, the EPRDF abandoned its references to creating a "people's court" and "letting the broad masses" decide the fate of detained army officials, WPE members and government officials.⁷⁴ The EPRDF then stated that it would be setting up an

⁷²Robert Press, "Ethiopia's Army Is Walking Home," Christian Science Monitor, 5 August 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] Indexed Media Review, Vol. II, No. 5, Week of July 30 - August 5, 1991). Africa Watch, "Ethiopia: Waiting for Justice: Shortcomings in Establishing the Rule of Law" (New York: The Africa Watch Committee, 8 May 1992), Volume IV, Issue No. 7, p. 16.

⁷³"Ethiopia: `Barbarous Crimes,'" Africa Confidential, 21 February 1992 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] Indexed Media Review, Vol. III, No. 9, Week of February 25 - March 2, 1992).

⁷⁴"Ethiopia: Holding the Centre," Africa Confidential, 14 June 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] Indexed Media Review, Vol. II, No. 1, Week of July 2-8, 1991).

independent judiciary which would try detainees, but that creating a new judicial system would have to wait until elections had been held and a new constitution decided upon. This decision was not necessarily vindictive. The Transitional Government is attempting to cope simultaneously with serious ethnic violence, famine in its civilian population, and the restructuring of the entire political process and economic system. The fate of officials of the previous regime is but one of many competing priorities.

In response to this decision, however, Ethiopian and international human rights activists, as well as potential donor countries, pressed the government to act more quickly. Ethiopian Human Rights Council chair Mesfin Wolde Mariam charged "blatant disregard of human rights" in the treatment of detained officers.⁷⁵ In response to pressure, the Transitional Government decided to create a special tribunal to try detainees. In September 1992, a special prosecutor was appointed to try the estimated 2,000 Mengistu government officials and WPE members in detention, but the trials had not begun by late December 1992. Africa Watch has expressed some reservations about specific provisions of the planned trial arrangement, but does not yet consider the structure of the process to be unfair.⁷⁶ Until these detainees are tried, it will not be possible to make a judgement about the fairness of the Transitional Government's judicial procedures, or

⁷⁵Robert M. Press, "Ethiopia's Army Is Walking Home," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 5, 1991, p. 6. "Ethiopian Human Rights Group Calls For Trial of 1,376 Detainees," Reuters, 13 December 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] *Indexed Media Review*, Vol. II, No. 22, Week of December November 26 - December 2, 1991).

⁷⁶"Ethiopia: Majorities and Minorities," *Africa Confidential*, 12 July 1991 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] *Indexed Media Review*, Vol. II, No. 2, Week of July 9-15, 1991). Jill Smolowe, "Ethiopia: Return to Normalcy," *Time*, November 4, 1991, p. 48. Africa Watch, "Ethiopia: Waiting for Justice: Shortcomings in Establishing the Rule of Law" (New York: The Africa Watch Committee, 8 May 1992), Volume IV, Issue No. 7, p. 16.

whether in the course of these trials, additional arrests will be made related to war crimes.⁷⁷

⁷⁷"Ousted Marxists To Be Tried For War Crimes," The Associated Press, 3 September 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Mengistu's Officials Will Be Put On Trial," ~~The Times~~ (UK), 3 September 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database).

ELECTIONS

The EPRDF has staged two sets of elections since it came to power in May 1991, local elections in early 1992, and regional elections on June 21, 1992. National elections are scheduled for the end of 1993 or early 1994. The EPRDF invited international observers, including human rights monitoring groups, the African-American Institute, members of the United States Congress, human rights groups including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, and observers from other foreign governments, to observe the elections. International observers concluded that the elections were "marred by widespread government intimidation of voters, harassment of opposition candidates, and a lack of any real choice in many parts of the country." One observer concluded that, "I don't think anyone is calling it a free and fair election." Another stated, "The transitional government had not established conditions to facilitate free political competition and choice and as a result several important organizations withdrew from the elections." Observers are divided over whether admitted abuses were the result of overzealous regional officials, poor organization and insufficient preparation, or if the EPRDF intended to manipulate the results. Most observers agree, however, that the EPRDF held elections too quickly and without sufficient preparation, in the hopes that foreign governments would consider them an act of good faith and begin to release desperately needed aid.⁷⁸

Pre-Election Problems

⁷⁸Keith B. Richburg, "International Observer Team Criticizes Ethiopian Elections," *Washington Post*, 24 June 1992, p. A24. Gayle Smith, "Birth Pains of a New Ethiopia," *The Nation*, July 1, 1991, Vol. 253, #1, p. 20. Terrence Lyons, Brookings Institution, "The Transition Toward Democracy in Ethiopia: Observations on the Elections in Welega, June 1992," Testimony prepared for presentation to the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on African Affairs hearing, "Looking Back and Reaching Forward: Prospects for Democracy in Ethiopia," 17 September 1992. "Revised Statement of the African-American Institute On the District and Regional Elections In Ethiopia -- 1992," 25 June 1992.

A number of political parties boycotted the June 1992 elections. These included some member parties of the EPRDF. It also included some of the parties represented in the Council of Representatives of the Transitional Government, most notably the Oromo Liberation Front. Several parties which formed after the July 1991 conference, and which were not represented in the Council of Representatives, including the All-Amhara People's Organization (AAPO) and the Ethiopian Democratic Action Group (EDAG), also boycotted the elections. The boycotters cited a wide variety of reasons, some related directly to conditions affecting certain political parties, some related to structural, logistical and procedural problems, and some related to documented or alleged acts of intimidation or abuse by the EPRDF.

These incidents included:

- * clashes between the EPRDF and ethnic armies, and clashes among ethnic armies, particularly involving Oromos but also Somalis, Afars, and other groups; (In some areas, including the territory of the Oromo, Somali, Afar, Borena, Guji, Geri, and Burji ethnic clashes were serious enough for the government to postpone elections.)
- * violations of ceasefire agreements, inadequate measures to disarm ethnic armies and bandits, violations of agreements on confining ethnic armies to camps by many parties, including the EPRDF, and failure to fully deploy the police forces;
- * killings by the EPRDF of some leaders of one of the Oromo parties;
- * arrests, detentions, harassment, and intimidation of contestants in some, but not all, regions; (The offices of some opposition parties, particularly the OLF, were shut down.)
- * intimidation of those registering to vote, including attempts to prevent voters known to support opposition parties from registering, preventing those who refused to state their ethnicity or tried to identify themselves as "Ethiopians" from registering; and
- * inadequate monitoring of the number and distribution of electoral cards.⁷⁹

⁷⁹Keith B. Richburg, "International Observer Team Criticizes Ethiopian Elections," *Washington Post*, 24 June 1992, p. A24. "Ethiopia Council of Representatives Members Point Out Problems Facing Elections," British Broadcasting Corporation, 11 June 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Ethiopia Election Date Set

The All-Amhara People's Organization was one of the parties which boycotted the election. Among its reasons for withdrawing, it cited an alleged incident in which a commander of a local militia of the Oromo People's Democratic Organization, a member of the ruling EPRDF coalition,

Despite Calls For Delay," Reuters, 10 June 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Ethiopia Radical Moslem Group Pulls Out Of Polls," Reuters, 8 June 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). Scott Peterson, "Ethiopians Head For Electoral Crossroads to Civil War or Peace," *The Daily Telegraph*, 28 May 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). Aidan Hartley, "Ethnic Feuds Resurface In Ethiopia Ahead Of Polls," Reuters, 25 May 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Regional Elections Due on June 7," Agence France Presse, 12 May 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Ethiopia Local Elections In The South Disrupted By Tribal Clashes," British Broadcasting Corporation, 9 May 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Ethiopia Electoral Commission's Statement on Voting Procedures in Oromoland," British Broadcasting Corporation, 29 April 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "Ethiopia EPRDF and OLF Report On Their Agreements to Council of Representatives," British Broadcasting Corporation, 24 April 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). Jean-Pierre Campagne, "Ethiopia's Government Fails to Establish Control," Agence France Presse, 21 April 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). "U.S. Official Says Ethiopia Could Fall Back Into Civil War," Agence France Presse, 11 April 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database).

Below is a list of the political parties which belong to the Council of Representatives. Those listed "has signed" signed a document which criticized the election process for the reasons cited in the text preceding this footnote. Not all signatories voted against having the elections, or withdrew from competition in the elections. (1) The Harer National League [HNL] has not signed the critique. (2) The Afar Liberation Front [ALF] has not signed. (3) The Agew People Democratic Movement [APDM] has signed. (4) The Burji People Democratic Organisation [BPDO] has signed. (5) The Benishangul People's Liberation Movement [BPLM] has not signed. (6) The Ethiopian Democratic Movement Group [EDMG] has signed. (7) The Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic Forces [COEDF] has signed. (8) The Ethiopian Democratic Union [EDU] has signed. (9) The Ethiopian National Democratic Organisation [ENDO] has not signed. (10) The Gambela People's Liberation Movement [GPLM] has not signed. (11) The Gurage People's Democratic Front [GPDF] has signed. (12) The Gedeo People's Democratic Organisation [GPDO] has signed. (13) The Hadiya National Democratic Organisation [HNDO] has signed. (14) Horyal [as heard; presumably Horyal Democratic Front] has not signed. (15) The Oromo Liberation Islamic Front [as heard; presumably IFLO] has not signed. (16) The Issa and Gurgura Liberation Front [IGLF] has signed. (17) The Kembata People's Congress [KPC] has signed. (18) The Kefa People's Administrative Region Democratic Union [as heard], has signed. (19) The Oromo Abo Liberation Front [OALF] has signed. (20) The Omotic People's Democratic Front [OPDF] has signed. (21) The Oromo Liberation Front [OLF] has signed. (22) The United Oromo People's Liberation Front [UOPLF] has not signed. (23) The Sidama Liberation Movement [SLM] has signed. (24) The representatives of workers have not signed. (25) The Welayita People's Democratic Front [WPDF] has signed. (26) The Western Somalia Liberation Front [WSLF] has signed. (27) The Yem Nationality Movement has signed. (28) The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front [EPRDF] has not signed. (29) The Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement [EPDM] has not signed. (30) The Tigray People's Liberation Front [TPLF] has not signed. (31) The Oromo People's Democratic Organisation [OPDO] has not signed. (32) The Ethiopian Democratic Officers' Revolutionary Movement [EDORM] has not signed. [Text reprinted in "Ethiopia Council of Representatives Members Point Out Problems Facing Elections," British Broadcasting Corporation, 11 June 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database).]

ordered the killings of Amharas in the central Shewa region, the area surrounding Addis Ababa. Although the AAPO did not give an estimate of the numbers killed, it stated that victims of the massacre were shot dead or burned alive in their huts on June 3-4, 1992. The EPRDF acknowledged ethnic violence in the Shewa region between Oromos and Amharas, but denied that there was a deliberate massacre.⁸⁰

Problems During the Elections

Despite these problems, some of which the EPRDF itself acknowledged, the Council of Representatives decided to proceed with the elections, postponing them indefinitely in certain areas -- including the Afar and Somali regions, the charter city of Harar, and eastern and western Oromo areas -- because ethnic clashes or poor access to polling places due to bad roads made elections impossible. In some parts of northern Ethiopia, including Addis Ababa and other major urban centers, international observers concluded that the elections were "procedurally regular." In other areas where elections were held, international observers pointed to a number of problems with the electoral process. As mentioned above, there was disagreement about whether the EPRDF organized, condoned, or was simply unable to control some of these abuses and difficulties:

- * failure of government officials to educate the population about voting procedures and the purpose of the ballot;
- * widespread government intimidation of voters, including election officials instructing voters to choose only the government candidates, and the EPRDF's visible movements of its

⁸⁰Abebe Andualem, "Ethnic Factions Blame State for Massacre," The Associated Press, 18 June 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). Tsegaye Tadesse, "Major Ethiopian Faction Withdraws From Elections," Reuters, 18 June 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database).

- troops during the election period;
- * harassment of opposition candidates;
 - * widespread electoral abuses;
 - * lack of any real choice in many parts of the country. In most areas, the EPRDF and its affiliated ethnic parties were the only choices on the ballot;
 - * administrative problems, such as the failure to constitute bona fide local and regional election committees in the manner specified by Proclamation 11; poor communications up and down the electoral commission hierarchy; failure to deliver registration and voting materials on time; and inadequate and/or delayed funding for election committees;
 - * violence and fraud in certain areas, where elections were held, including Dire Dawa, Harar, parts of Shoa, Dembi Dolo, Awasa, and elsewhere. In most cases, the allegations were made against local administrators and the EPRDF-dominated government. In others, they were made against opposition parties such as the OLF in Wollega; and
 - * barring of members of the WPE, security forces and soldiers who had not passed through the Rehabilitation Commission's process, and anyone in prison (including former Mengistu government officials and soldiers who are being detained pending charges and trials) from standing for election or voting.⁸¹

⁸¹"Progress for Ethiopian Transition but Polling Deemed 'Imperfect,'" *Africa News*, July 6, 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database). Keith B. Richburg, "International Observer Team Criticizes Ethiopian Elections," *Washington Post*, 24 June 1992, p. A24. "No US Regional Election Aid," *Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 7 March 1992 (as reported in the Immigration and Refugee Board Documentation Center [IRBDC] *Indexed Media Review*, Vol. III, No. 12, Week of March 17-23, 1992). Richard Dowden, "Democracy Dies In The Womb," *The Independent*, 1 November 1992 (as reported in NEXIS database).

MAPS OF ETHIOPIA⁸²

⁸²Maps are from Africa Watch, *Evil Days: 30 Years of War and Famine in Ethiopia* (New York: Human Rights Watch, September 1991), pp. viii-xii

MAPS OF ETHIOPIA⁸³

⁸³Maps are from Africa Watch, *Evil Days: 30 Years of War and Famine in Ethiopia* (New York: Human Rights Watch, September 1991), pp. viii-xii

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MAPS OF ETHIOPIA⁸⁵

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MAPS OF ETHIOPIA⁸⁶

⁸⁶Maps are from Africa Watch, *Evil Days: 30 Years of War and Famine in Ethiopia* (New York: Human Rights Watch, September 1991), pp. viii-xii

APPENDIX A: ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION OF ETHIOPIA⁸⁷

- Amharas -- largely Christian: comprise less than 25% of Ethiopia's population.
- Tigreans -- largely Christian: comprise less than 10% of Ethiopia's population.
- Oromo -- largely Muslim and traditional religions, comprise about 40% of the population, and are the largest single ethnic group in Ethiopia.
- Sidama-- largely traditional religions, comprise 9% of the population
- Shankella -- comprise 6% of the population
- Somali -- largely Muslim, comprise 6% of the population
- Afar -- (near Djibouti, nomadic) comprise 4% of the population, largely Muslim
- Gurage -- comprise 2% of the population
- Other groups: Some Semitic (such as the "Falasha"), Cushitic, and Nilotic groups.

⁸⁷Ethiopia: A Country Study, Area Handbook Series (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), p. xvi.

INDEX

AAPO.....	11, 16, 17, 19, 42-44
Addis Ababa	8, 9, 11, 14, 16-18, 23-25, 29-31, 44
AESM	
see MEISON	28
Afar Liberation Front	7, 43
Afars.....	4, 7, 42-44, 51
Africa Watch.....	4, 6, 13, 14, 20, 22, 26-28, 32-34, 38, 40, 46-50
All Ethiopian Socialist Movement	
see MEISON	28
All-Amhara People's Organization	
see AAPO.....	11
Amhara.....	2-7, 9-11, 13-21, 27, 28, 30-32, 42-44, 51
amnesty.....	27, 34, 41
Amnesty International.....	27, 41
Awasa.....	45
banditry	13, 35, 37
Borena.....	42
British.....	6, 12, 14, 19, 20, 22, 27, 35, 37, 43
Burji	42, 43
candidates, opposition.....	41, 45
Christians.....	6, 7, 11, 14
civil war	10, 12, 15, 28, 43
Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic Forces	
see COEDF	2
COEDF.....	2, 9, 10, 16, 17, 21-29, 43
detention of members by EPRDF	22
Cohen, Herman.....	9
constitutional monarchy.....	28, 31
Coptic Christian.....	20
Coptic church	20
corruption.....	8, 35
Council of Representatives.....	1, 10, 11, 14, 23, 29, 31, 34, 42-44
Cushitic	51
Dembi.....	45
demobilized soldiers	18
demonstrations.....	9-11, 16, 19
Derej Deressa	28
Dergue.....	28
Detentions	
see human rights, detentions.....	2
dictatorship	13, 15
Dire Dawa.....	20, 45
Djibouti	14, 20, 51

Dolo	45
drought	7, 8, 17, 18
EDAG	42
EDU	7, 16, 24, 25, 28, 29, 43
Elections	1, 12-14, 16, 34, 37, 38, 41-43, 45
Elections, intimidation of voters	41, 45
Elections, local	41, 43
Elections, national	10, 41
Elections, regional	41, 43
ELF	6, 7
ENDO	16
EPDA	28
EPLF	1, 2, 7-10, 21, 36
EPRDF	1, 2, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 28, 29, 31, 43, 45
see also Transitional Government	1, 2, 5, 6, 8-32, 34-39, 41-45
EPRP	7, 11, 14, 17, 22-28
detention of members by EPRDF	22
Eritrea	1, 2, 4-8, 10, 11, 15-17, 19-22, 27, 31, 36
Eritrean Liberation Front	
see ELF	6
Eritrean People's Liberation Front	
see EPLF	7
Ethiopian Democratic Action Group	
see EDAG	42
Ethiopian Democratic Union	
see EDU	7
Ethiopian Human Rights Council	13, 39
Ethiopian Jews (Falasha)	9
Ethiopian National Democratic Organization	
see ENDO	16
Ethiopian People's Democratic Alliance	
see EPDA	28
Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front	
see EPRDF	1
Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party	
see EPRP	7
Ethnicity, issues related to	1-8, 11, 13-21, 24-28, 31, 39, 42-45, 51
Executions	
see human rights, executions	3
Exiles, Ethiopian, returning to Ethiopia	1, 9
Expulsions from Eritrea	
see human rights, expulsions	2, 4, 20-22, 36
Falasha	
see Ethiopian Jews (Falasha)	51
famine	6-8, 19, 39, 46-50
feudalism	6, 7, 15

Fikre Selassie Wogderess	38
Fisseha Desta	38
forced resettlements.....	8
Geri	42
Gojjam	2, 14, 22, 27
guerrilla warfare.....	26
Guji	42
guns.....	9
Gurage.....	43, 51
Haile Selassie.....	1, 4, 6, 7, 28-31
Haile Selassie and supporters, reburial of	27, 30
Harar.....	17, 44, 45
Hararge province.....	20
human rights.....	2, 6, 8, 11-13, 18, 20, 22, 23, 26, 27, 33, 35, 39, 41, 46-50
human rights abuses during the Mengistu era	33
Human Rights Watch.....	6, 20, 22, 41, 46-50
human rights, arbitrary executions	3, 13
human rights, civil rights.....	33, 34, 38
human rights, detentions	2, 12, 16, 22, 26, 27, 33, 35, 37, 38, 40
families of those in detention.....	33
human rights, disenfranchisement	2, 16
human rights, expulsions of Ethiopians from Eritrea	2, 4, 20-22, 36
human rights, fair trials	33
human rights, free press.....	6
human rights, harassment	41, 42, 45
human rights, intimidation.....	41, 42, 45
human rights, legal protection	17
human rights, minorities	16-18, 24, 25, 40
human rights, political killings.....	3, 13
human rights, protection of minorities	
chartered towns.....	17
human rights, restrictions on	2, 3
international aid	18
Israel.....	9
Issas	20
Italy	6
Jews	
see Ethiopian Jews (Falasha).....	9
judicial system	3, 39
Kinfe Gebre-Mehdin.....	13
land redistribution	7
land tenure systems.....	6
Lion of Judah	30
London.....	5, 9, 19, 28, 35
London peace talks	19
looting.....	35

Marxism, influence on MEISON	28
Marxism, influence on the COEDF	21
Marxism, influence on the EPRDF	21
Marxism, influence on the EPRP	26
Marxism, influence on the TPLF	10
MEISON	11, 22, 26, 28
Meles Zenawi (EPRDF leader).....	14, 23, 29
Mengesha Seyum.....	24
Mengistu Haile Mariam.....	1, 2, 4, 6-10, 14-23, 26-30, 32-38, 40, 45
see Mengistu.....	1
Mesfin Wolde Mariam.....	39
military.....	2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 14-17, 23, 25, 27-32, 35, 38, 39
military coup.....	7
military officials.....	2, 29, 30
Moa Anbessa	30, 31
Muslim separatists	6
Muslims.....	6, 14, 20, 51
Muslims, anti-Muslim actions	20
nationalization	7
Nilotic.....	51
OLF	1, 7-13, 20, 37, 42, 43, 45
Oromo	1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 17, 20, 37, 42-44, 51
Oromo Liberation Front	
see OLF	7
Oromo People's Democratic Organization	44
see OPDO	44
Oromos, anti-Oromo actions.....	20
Orthodox church patriarch.....	30
Orthodox Trinity Cathedral	30
police.....	19, 31, 33, 35, 39, 42
Political killings	
see human rights, political killings.....	3
Political parties	5, 15, 17, 21, 22, 28, 32
Political rights	
see also human rights, civil rights.....	2, 16, 34
Prisoners	
see human rights, detentions	29, 33, 45
re-education center.....	37
Red Terror	26
refugees.....	18, 22
Rehabilitation Commission	45
Rehabilitation of Mengistu era officials.....	37, 45
Royalists	
see also Haile Selassie, Moa Anbessa	28, 29
secular state	11
self-determination	11

Semitic.....	51
serfs.....	6
Shankella.....	51
Shewa region.....	44
Shewan Amhara royalty.....	6
Shoa.....	45
Sidama.....	43, 51
soldiers.....	2, 15, 16, 18, 21, 27, 35-38, 45
Somali Abo Liberation Front.....	7
Somalis.....	7, 14, 42, 44, 51
student radicals.....	28
Students.....	17, 19, 28
Sudan.....	22, 27, 36
Tamarit Layne.....	14
Tesfaye Dinka.....	8, 9
Tesfaye Gebre-Kidan.....	8
Tesfaye Wolde Selassie.....	38
Tigre.....	6, 7, 24, 27
Tigre People's Democratic Movement see TPDM.....	24
Tigre People's Liberation Front see TPLF.....	7
TPDM.....	24
TPLF.....	7, 8, 10, 26, 27
Transitional Government see also EPRDF.....	1, 2, 10, 13, 15, 20, 29, 32-34, 37-42
trials, special prosecutor.....	33, 40
troops.....	8, 10, 12, 27, 36, 45
United States.....	1, 4, 9, 10, 12, 19, 22, 26-28, 30, 41
United States Congress.....	41
United States embassy.....	19
University, representation in National Council.....	5, 11, 27
war.....	6-8, 10, 12, 15, 22-25, 28, 33, 36, 40, 43, 46-50
White Terror.....	26
Wollega.....	45
Workers Party of Ethiopia see WPE.....	2
workers, unemployed.....	10, 19
WPE.....	2, 31-33
Zimbabwe.....	8