

A BIBLIOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF HISTORICAL ARTICLES IN THE ETHIOPIAN HERALD (1943-1963)¹

Abebe Dires

Bahir Dar University, Ethiopia

Abstract:

The period that followed the end of the Second World War was important for Ethiopia. There were many sweeping changes in the political life of the country. After the return of the Emperor Haile Selassie I to Ethiopia from exile (England), there were many changes introduced in an effort to strengthen the central government and modernization.

However, much of what has been said in many of the government media was more with propaganda theme than reality. And this was one of the political plays of the time as far as the Imperial Throne was concerned. The objective of this article is to see the contents and give analysis of selected articles in the Ethiopian Herald with political and historical themes with propaganda orientations from 1943-1963.

¹ Ethiopia's first printing press in its history was established in the mid 1920s, *Berhanena Selam* Printing Press (Light and Peace), almost monopoly institution run by the government. The Printing Press played a role in the publication of two national weekly newspapers, *Addis Zemen* (New Era), in Amharic (1941) and its English counterpart the *Ethiopian Herald*, in 1943. These two served as the main official press organs of the state and as the main source of information for literate people. Therefore, the Ethiopian Herald was intended to serve the state as the only way to give information and propaganda for foreign readers. This news paper usually carries the English version of the Amharic News paper, *Addis Zemen*. For the most part, these print media were controlled by the country's government, subject to official censorship. Articles that appeared in these two governments controlled News Papers were usually full of exaggerations of the activities of the emperor in internal and international affairs. Why I named these articles "Historical Articles" is because these articles were devoted to capitalize the Emperors effort to establish a personal favor and a national feeling in the minds of the people and the international communities. On the other hand, what dominate the history of Ethiopia in the twentieth century have been the history of Emperor Haileselassie I and his efforts to centralize power, legitimize his power, and get popularity. On these conditions, I believe that these articles deserve the name "Historical Articles."

Keywords: Emperor Haileselassie I, The Ethiopian Herald, Post liberation, Addis Zemen, modernization, centralization

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to identify and give brief overview of articles of historical significance that appeared in the Ethiopian Herald from 1943 to 1963 produced to commemorate certain historical events or to reconstruct histories. The articles under study were written following an important historical phenomenon in the history of Ethiopia: the Liberation and Restoration of Ethiopian Monarchy. In line with the major task of the Ethiopian state after liberation, these articles raised many issues in retrospect and prospect going back and forth from different point of view for different purposes.

The post liberation period saw a restart of centralization and modernization endeavors which had been started before the Italian aggression. The multiplicity of Ethiopia's foreign relation for politics and diplomatic affairs was also another priority in the post liberation period. As part of state apparatus, the Ethiopian Herald in the specified period served to propagate, incite, convince and inform people on domestic and international affairs. Noteworthy here is that, though most of the articles in the Ethiopian Herald in the period under study were political in nature and produced with propaganda orientation, there were also a handful of articles with historical reconstructions dealing with socio cultural aspects.

Whatever themes they may have, in most cases, the articles were produced on the occasions of some historical phenomena. The celebration of the Victory of Adwa, commemoration of the Massacre of February 1937, birthday and coronation day celebrations of Emperor Haile Selassie I were the major ones for which articles were produced in honor of the subjects. In rare cases, articles were published in New Year celebrations and public holidays.

Concerning the condition of the print media in Ethiopia during the imperial regime, some scholarly works confirm its domination by the state. In the words of Bahru “an assiduously fostered cult of personality stripped Hayla-Sellase of all human attributes, and elaborates him to superhuman beings. The, media played a crucial role in this regard. In the early stages, the educational system served the same purpose.”² The Amharic counterpart of

² Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia: 1855-1991*. 2nd ed.(Oxford: James Currey Ltd., 2002), 202.

the Ethiopian Herald, Addis Zemen is said to have been a print media dedicated to educate and indoctrinate people in the field of social issues, education, culture and art, politics, parliament, diplomacy and so on.³ Of course the, it was not only the print media that was used for government agendas. "The Ethiopians, especially the royal family, utilized radio Addis Ababa for political purpose."⁴

The immediate contemporary of the Ethiopian herald was the Arabic weekly, *Al 'Alem* which was founded by the Ministry of Information in 1942. Like other print medias such as *Addis Zemen*, the Ethiopian Herald, and *Sedeqalamachin* (Our Flag) it contributed propaganda service to the state for the Arabic world.⁵ Temesgen Kassie pointed out the following concerning the role of the print media in the process of praising Haile Sellase's government:

*After the king returned from exile in 1941, many of the articles that appeared in government's newspapers such as Addis Zemen[New Era], Sendeqalamachin[Our Flag] and Ethiopian Herald seemed obsessed about discussing and highlighting the king's whereabouts, as well as his heroism, dedication and pride.*⁶

To handle the articles selected in a meaningful way, I classified them in to categories according to their themes as reflection of state political opinions in different fields. Of course, these themes are not exclusively independent. Accordingly the areas where the articles are found to have served the government interests are in priority order centralization of state authority, modernization and development, and foreign relation and diplomatic maneuvers. Few articles were also written on other issues other than these themes.

As far as the nature of articles produced was concerned, most of them were produced by journalists of either indigenous or international ones. Only few articles were written by

³ Sahilu Kassa, "Readership satisfaction of Addis Zemen and Addis Admas in Addis Ababa," (M.A. Thesis, Addis Ababa University, Department of Journalism and Communications, 2008), p. 10.

⁴ John Gartley, "Early development of radio in Ethiopia, 1930_1953," in Ethiopia in Broader Perspective, Papers of the 13th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies(Vol. 1. (1997)), p.93.

⁵ Hussein Ahmed, "Al 'Alem: The History of an Ethiopian Arabic Weekly," in Proceedings of the 13th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies (Vol. 1. (1994)), p.155.

⁶ Temesgen Kassie, "Analysis of Environmental Coverage in Addis Zemen Amharic daily News Paper," (M.A. Thesis, Addis Ababa University, Department of Journalism and Communications, 2007), pp. 34, 35.

professionals to the issues raised. It is also evident that some articles were reprints from other publications. It is also common to find redundant ideas even in articles with different title. Some times, government press statements appear as articles with anonymous writers. In this case, it would be difficult to identify articles in each publication of the newspaper. Thus, my work as a bibliographic compilation of the articles in the Ethiopian Herald from 1943 to 1963 could by no means be complete.

A Brief Analysis of the Articles

Immediately after liberation, most of the articles in the Ethiopian Herald emphasized the victory against Italy, fascist atrocities during occupation, patriotic efforts, and above all the speedy attempt to reestablish the imperial order in every aspect. As a major historical episode of Ethiopia's past, the period of Italian occupation was taken as a real setback to the country's economic, political, social, and cultural developments. On the other hand, Ethiopians were praised, and Ethiopian friends appreciated for their contributions to the liberation efforts. There were twelve articles devoted to the theme of liberation and restoring the unity hitherto disrupted by the five years of Italian occupation.

Similarly, with the objective of unity and keeping the sovereignty of Imperial Ethiopia, some articles were written on post liberation political settlements by the international community as part of global settlements following the end of WWII. The issue of Eritrea in the north and the Italian Somaliland and Ogaden in the southeast, and other related matters were raised. The articles with specific issues were loaded with Ethiopian dissatisfactions against the intensions of the Great Powers regarding former Italian colonies. Significant numbers of articles were written on the issue of Ethiopia's territorial claims on international forum. According to the words of Asnake Ali, the articles concerning the Eritrean issues, "articles were partisans in nature reflecting official policy."⁷

Some of the articles deal with the liberation efforts of individuals or groups of people.⁸ The majority of articles in this group, however, discussed fascist atrocities in Ethiopia during the war and the five years time of its stay in the country.⁹ There are also some articles which emphasized the general global conditions that facilitated liberation

⁷ Asnake Ali, "Addis Zemen and the Eritrean Issue:A Review of Articles, 1941_1947,"in *New Trends in Ethiopian studies, Papers of the 12th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*(Vol. 1. (1994)), p.469.

⁸ The Ethiopian Herald, May 6, 1944, September 8, 1947, October 14, 1959.

⁹ *Ibid.*, February 19, 1944, April 1, 1944, October 17, 1946, July 29, 1946.

efforts.¹⁰ And still, few articles focused on actual aggression move of the Italians to spark the initial war at Wal Wal. Here, writers maintained the view that the Wal Wal incident was the starter of the Global War (WWII).¹¹

For complete independence and reestablishment of united Ethiopia, the post liberation period saw high degree of international involvement. In this regard many articles were produced by different writers and published by the Ethiopian Herald. Here, the main focuses of the articles was the restoration and Ethiopia's legitimate rights to the Italian threatened territories of Eritrea and Ogaden. From the articles selected, in this regard, most of them are concerning the United Nations and its activities in relation to the ex-Italian colonies. The conclusions of the articles were the same: on historical and legal considerations, the United Nations should have allowed Ethiopia (an ally) to reunite Eritrea and Ogaden rather than compromising Italy (an aggressor).¹² The rest were devoted to make historical arguments how Ethiopia raised claims to the lost territories before the United Nations.¹³ And few were concerning the quest of the peoples of these regions for reunion with Ethiopia. The aggregate concepts of these articles dealing on the interest of people for reunion is that in opposing Italian fascist oppression, the people of these territories preferred reunion. But the voice of the indigenous people who preferred independence from Ethiopia was outshined by the unionists.¹⁴

With the notion of inciting the society towards centralization of the state authority and increasing imperial politics in progress, a number of articles were written. Most of the articles went back to the time of inception of modernization of Ethiopia in the second half of the 19th century. But to the entire article, the landmark in the modernization of Ethiopia was the period since *Ras Teferi's* regency. Articles with theme of legitimizing the Imperial Power of Ethiopia and its progressive boost in modernization and development are many.

Nearly all the articles in this theme were written in honor of Emperor Haile Selassie I on the occasion of his birth days or his coronation anniversary days. As a result, the contents of these articles radiates from personal life of the emperor and his efforts to his country and peoples.¹⁵ Other publications on the general aggregate progress of Ethiopia also usually made

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, March 10, 17, 24, 1945, May 9, 1945.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, May 9, 1945.

¹² *Ibid.*, October 20, 1947, December 20, 1948, April 14, 1949, September 12, 1949, July 14, 1945.

¹³ *Ibid.*, October 5, 1945, January 27, 1947, March 8, 1948.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, August 19, 1946, March 17, 1947, October 27, 1951.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, July 8, 1946, July 23, 1947, January 4, 1956, July 21, 1947, April 21, 1956, July 21, 1947, July 23, 1959.

stress on the extra ordinary leadership talent of the emperor starting the time of his regency. According to these articles, although modernization was started in the second half of the nineteenth century, Emperor Haile Selassie was the pace maker.¹⁶ Here, it seems safe to comment that, though modernization and development were evident in relative senses, exaggerations of modernization indices, and too much credit for the emperor were serious problems in the articles. Economic, social, cultural, and intellectual developments were also frequently published in the Ethiopian Herald under discussion. But these were having political orientations too. They lacked depth and width as they were written from the top.

With regard to the country's foreign affairs, many articles in the Ethiopian Herald were dedicated to incite people towards unity of all Ethiopians to pursue Ethiopia's role in world affairs beginning in the pre Christian era. Here again, many articles were produced with the objective of tracing contemporary foreign relations from distant pasts. Both hostile relationships and friendly ones with different countries in different times were highlighted. Ancient glories of Ethiopia and its expansion to the north as far as Egypt and to the southeast as far as South Arabia were discussed to help contemporary attempts to win diplomatic gains by rallying its people behind. In connection with foreign diplomatic efforts of Ethiopia since ancient time, there appeared ample number of articles.

Though there were few historical reconstructions, most of the articles discussed contemporary issues. On the other hand, some of the writers focused on Ethiopia's friendly relations with some countries like Russia, Greece, India, and Czechoslovakia and so on. Bonds that tried with different countries in history and as well as contemporary issues seemed to have been different. Early Christianity and nonaligned movement during WWII made Ethiopia friends of Greece and India respectively. Russia and Czechoslovakia were also in the heart of Ethiopia for their opposition of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. Particularly, the strong stand of Russia in the League of Nations on the side of Ethiopia was credited.¹⁷

The other groups dealt with the historical and contemporary hostile relations of Ethiopia with Egypt and Italy.¹⁸ The theme of these articles was however, the same: to give historical background for whatever the nature of relations Ethiopia may have with any country in contemporary situations. In addition, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Ethiopia's role in the independence movement of colonial Africa was carried by Ethiopian Herald

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, July 25, 1949, August 29, September 5, 12, 19, 26, October 3, November 21, 25, December 12, 26, 1949, January 2, 16, 23, 1963, February 13, 27, 1963, March 20, 1963, April 3, 1950, January 16, 1960, November 2, 1962, August 1-4, 1963.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, November 11, 1944, December 29, 1947, January 26, 1948, July 4, 1953, July 13, 1950, February 7, 10, 11, 1959.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, March 31, 1947, July 1, 8, 15, 22, 1946, October 14, 1946.

articles. Here again the personalization of the effort for Pan African movement was evident.¹⁹

Socio-cultural progresses gained relatively less attention. The numbers of articles published in twenty years time were few. This figure is very small as compared to the number of article on other issues. And still these scant articles on socio-cultural and intellectual thoughts were intended to serve the interest of the then government based on Devine kingship. Its origin being Christianity and *Geez* languages in the north, cultural, religious, and literary developments were said to have been the results of the Christian state of Ethiopia as they were being given tutelages of the state.

Nevertheless, as far as my evaluation is concerned, there appeared also articles with less political propaganda loads and more historical reconstructions and historical analysis. In these articles the general consideration was seemingly to reconstruct the past and give analysis of historical events through ages. Most of these articles were written by professional historians including such personalities as Richard Pankhurst (AAU), Apostolos Dascalkis (University of Athens), and William Leo Hansberry (Harvard University U.S.A).²⁰

There are also articles with the discussion of the antiquities of Ethiopian in the field of art philosophy, literary developments in the medieval period and in the nineteenth century and onwards.²¹ In addition, Ethiopia's early contacts with the outside world for cultural, religious and commercial ties were included.²²

Conclusion

In final analysis of the contents of the articles consulted from 1943 to 1963 in the Ethiopian Herald, the central themes were incitation of people towards centralization and unity of state authority, modernization and development, and exposition of Ethiopia's relation with the outside world in the post liberation periods.

As the articles were in most cases written by non professionals, the issues they raised usually lacked sounding arguments and strength of substantiations. In addition, most of the articles are narratives with little or no analytical rationalizations.

With their limitations, however, the articles are valuable for further researches of the period they were written. They could be sources of information and initials to make

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, November 2, 1960, July 31, 1963, November 2, 28, 1961.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, August 12, 1944, September 30, 1944, October 14, 1961, February 22-24, 1962, May 8-10,12, 18-20, 22-27, 29-30, 1963, March 1, 5-10, 12, 1963.

²¹ *Ibid.*, July 14, 1945, July 13, 1950.

²² *Ibid.*, October 2, 9 16, 23, 30, 1943, February 24, 1945, April, 7, 14, 28, 1945, October 18, 25, 1958.

inferences just by looking the conditions under which they were written, and the purposes they were intended to meet.

Bibliography of Historical Articles in the Ethiopian Herald (1943-1963)

I. Articles with Defined Authors

Alazar Tesfamikael. "Eritrea Today." 4th year, No. 8-10, August and September, 1946.

Befkadu Woldemikael. "Black Friday 19th February, 1937." 1st year, No. 34, February 19, 1994.

Belahovesky, Alzandre. "Battle of Adwa was Vital in Ethiopian's History." 10th year, No. 37, March 7, 1953.

Bentwick, Norman. "Ethiopia among the United Nations." 6th year, No. 25-27, December 1948 and No. 28 January, 1949.

Borisov, V. "The Soviet Union and Ethiopia." 2nd year, No. 20, November 11, 1944.

Camera, Candid. "Principles for the Weak Experience for the Strong: Some Actual World Situations as they Affected Ethiopians Interests." 5th year, No.17, October 20, 1947.

_____ "Ethiopia Then and Now." 7th year, No. 5, July 25, 1949.

Descalkis, apostolos. "Greek and Ethiopian in Ancient Times." 20th year, No.351-357, February and March, 1963.

_____ "On Greek-Ethiopian Relations." 20th year, No. 358-364, March 1963.

Galieb, Omogi. "An African Student Sees the Implication of HIM's Birthday." 17th year. No. 176, July 23, 1959.

Hansberry, L.William. "Imperial Ethiopia in Ancient Times". 2nd year, No.7, August 12, 1944.

_____ "Ethiopia in the middle Ages." 2nd year, No.14, September 30, 1944.

Isaac, A.Charles. "India and Ethiopia (A Comparative Study of the Two Countries)." 5th year, No.31, January 26, 1948.

_____ "Eritrea and Ethiopia (from the Indian point of View)." 5th year, No.37, March 8, 1948.

Kamel, Murad. "Ethiopian Philosophers of the 17th Century." 3rd year, No.3, July 14, 1945.

Koumariansos, C.A. “Ethiopian Awaits Justice from the General Assembly.” 17th year No. 12, September 12, 1949.

_____ “Ethiopia Awaits Justice.” 6th year, No.44, April 25, 1949.

_____ “Ethiopia Advocates of African Freedom.” 19th year, No. 277, November 28, 1961.

L.B.C “The Stamps of Ethiopia.” 1st year, No.14-18, October , 1943.

Maraitits, John. “The Great Reformer.” 5th year, No.5, July 23, 1947.

Nikiforov, A. “the Soviet Union and Ethiopia.” 5th year, No.27, December 29, 1947.

Obali, M.H. “The Inspiring Monarch.” 15th year, No.4, July 21, 1947.

Pankhurst, Richard. “An Introduction to the Economic History of Ethiopia.” 19th year, No. 240, October 14, 1961.

_____ “Emperor Menelik and the Foundation of Addis Ababa.” 19th year, No. 349 February and No.106-109, May , 1962.

_____ “The Problem of five Arms in Ethiopia (1800 – 1935)”. 20th year No. 114-124, May , 1962.

Rayt, M.V. “Soviet Universities Also Study Ethiopia History, Philosophy.” 17th year, No. 35,37-38 February , 1959.

Salameh, Baulos. “Between Egypt and Ethiopia.” 4th year, No. 38, March 31, 1947.

Sanford, Christine, “Ethiopia Under Haile Selassie.” 4th year, No. 2 July8, 1946.

Semerjibashian, J. Wahaken. “An Outline f the History of Ethiopia”. 2nd year, No. 35 February and No.41-42, 44, April, 1945.

_____ “The Battle of Adwa”. 2nd year, No. 37-39, March , 1945.

Shibru Seifu. “Ethiopia’s Economy: A Social Analysis.” 15th year, No. 16, January 6 16, 1960.

Sisay Woldegerogis. “Ethiopian Youngsters will Never Forget.” 6th year, No. 16, October 17, 1946.

Smith, Homer. “Eritrea Demands Reunion with Ethiopia.” 4th year, No. 40, March17, 1947.

_____“will Ethiopia the Ally or Italy the Aggressor be Rewarded in Disposal of Italy’s Ex-colonies?” 6th year, No. 41, April 14, 1949.

_____“Israel Demanding New Sea Outlet from United Nations. What about Ethiopia?” 6th year, No. 26, December 20, 1948.

Talbot, A. David. “Haile Selassie First : The Silver Jubilee.” 13th year, No. 44, April 21, 1956.

Teferawork Beshah. “Parliament in Ethiopia.” 20th year, No. 257, November 1962 and No.382-385, August ,1963

Tesfaye Habtamer. “The Role of Ethiopia in Africa.” 19th year, No. 256, November 2, 1961.

Uvin, Nikolai. “A Review of Soviet-Ethiopian Cultural Relations”. 16th year, No.18, October 18, 1958.

_____16th year, No 19, October 25, 1958.

William M.Steen. “Ethiopia and World war II.” 2nd year, No. 46, May 9, 1945.

Wondossen Tsigue. “Ethiopian and Pan-Africanism.” 18th year, No. 263, November 2, 1960.

Wondossen Tsigue. “Land of Beauty and Bravery Supports Freedom.” 17th year, No. 131, June 1, 1959.

Wright, G.Stephen. “Amharic Literature.” 20th year, No. 381, July 31, 1963.

II Anonymous Articles

“Anniversary of the fall of Keren.” 1st year, No. 40, April 1, 1944.

“Adventure of Woizero Shewaregued.” 1st year, No. 45, May 6, 1944.

“Wal-Wal, The First Step on the Road to War.” 2nd year, No.46, May 9, 1945.

“Specific Steps Taken by Ethiopian Government in Claiming Eritrea and Italian Somaliland.” 3rd year, No. 14, October 5, 1945.

“Relations Between Ethiopian and Coptic Churches.” 4th year, No. 1-4, July , 1946.

“The Ethiopian Church during Italian Occupation.” 4th year, No. 5 July 29, 1946.

“How Can Egypt Claim Massawa.” 4th year, No. 16, October 14, 1946.

“Reserved area and Ogaden Raise Question.” 4th year, No. 31, January 27, 1947.

“The Ethiopian People and Liberty.” 5th year, No. 11, September 8, 1947.

“Wal-Wal the Spark Spread to Four corners of World.” 5th Year, No. 25, December 15, 1947.

“March of Progress.” 7th year No.10, August, No.11-14, September, No. 15 October, No 22-23 November, No.25,27 December 1949 and No.28,30-31 January, No.34,36 February, No.39 March ,no.41, April 1950.

“Czecho-Ethiopian Relations Based on Ties of Friendship.” 17th year, No. 167, July 13, 1950.

“Ethiopia and Eritrea.” 9th year, No. 18, October 27, 1951

“Friendly Ethiopian-American Relations 50 Years Old.” 11th year, No. 2, July 4, 1953.

“End of one Era and Beginning old Another Began with Jubilee”. 13th year, No. 29, January 4, 1956.

“The Story of Hero Patriot of the Italo-Ethiopian War.” 17th year No. 245-47, 50, October 1959.

References:

Bahru Zewde. *A History of Modern Ethiopia: 1855-1991*. 2nd ed. Oxford: James Currey Ltd., 2002.

Sahilu Kassa. "Readership satisfaction of Addis Zemen and Addis Admas in Addis Ababa." M.A. Thesis, Addis Ababa University, Department of Journalism and Communications, 2008.

John Gartley. "Early development of radio in Ethiopia,1930_1953," in Ethiopia in Broader Perspective, Papers of the 13th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies. Vol. 1. (1997).

Hussein Ahmed. "Al 'Alem: The History of an Ethiopian Arabic Weekly," in Proceedings of the 13th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies. Vol. 1. (1994).

Temesgen Kassie. "Analysis of Environmental Coverage in Addis Zemen Amharic daily News Paper. "M.A. Thesis, Addis Ababa University, Department of Journalism and Communications, 2007.

Asnake Ali. "Addis Zemen and the Eritrean Issue:A Review of Articles, 1941_1947,"in New Trends in Ethiopian studies, Papers of the 12th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies. Vol. 1. (1994).