



Oromo Studies Association Newsletter

Issue # 4

June 2009

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Message from the President

Greetings to you all!

In this issue, you will find the conference proposals/ abstracts submitted for the OSA Annual Conference 2009. As many of you already know, this year's conference is scheduled to take place on August 1-2 at the Georgia State University Campus, Atlanta, Georgia. The theme of the conference is "*Looking for Opportunity in Crisis: The Challenges of Freedom, Human Rights, and Sustainable Development in Oromia and the Horn of Africa*".

I am pleased that several OSA members and invited guests have responded to our call for papers with proposals/ panels covering a wide range of areas. Based on their thematic focus, I have organized these proposals into preliminary panels (which could change). As we get closer to the conference date, I will send you the full conference program, including this year's keynote speakers and the updated list of panels and speakers.

If you have any questions or concerns in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Abebe Adugna
OSA President

Oromo Studies Association (OSA)
Annual Conference 2009

Place:

Georgia State University Campus,
Atlanta, Georgia

Date:

August 1-2, 2009

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PANEL I. REGIONAL: THE ROLE OF THEOLOGY IN SOCIAL JUSTICE: THE CASE OF EAST AFRICA

Panel organized by: Asfaw Beyene, Ph.D, San Diego State University

Speakers:

The Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba, Director for African National Mission in Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

Professor Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, Charles Howard Candler Professor of Law, Emory Law School

Abstract: Among many troubled corners of our globe, the east African region has more than its fair share of political challenges that give birth to social injustice - poverty, abusive governance, environmental destruction, and many other collective tribulations. The growing marginalization of large percentages of the population in Ethiopia, failure for almost two decades to establish a viable government in Somalia, serious conflicts appearing and reappearing in West and South Sudan, and lack of political progress in Eritrea ostensibly complemented by its international isolation – by the same countries that supported its hard-won independence, are some examples. In the eyes of many observers, east Africa is either facing or is already in a political turmoil that may culminate into a deeper humanitarian disaster. This depressing perspective comes at a time when the global political order and the moods that favor peace, democracy, and economic growth underwent burgeoning transformation in a relatively short period of time. In most parts of the world, it is not cool to be a dictator anymore. This transformation is redefining the global map of what was once known as the 3rd World, but unfortunately the east African region has chosen to remain too loyal to this unflattering distinctiveness. Here too as elsewhere, political solutions have been proposed, assessed, and debated by politicians, and wars have been waged in the name of peace – but to no avail. These outstanding panelists will discuss the issue of peace and the political dynamics of east Africa from a theological point of view, to shed some light on the role of religion in bringing human rights and political justice.

PANEL II. REGIONAL: POLITICS, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND US FOREIGN POLICY

Factors that Helped the Current Minority Ethiopian Regime Stay in Power

Mosisa Aga, PhD, Auburn University Montgomery

Abstract: When the current Ethiopian regime, led by the former rebel group known as TPLF (Tigray People Liberation Front) came to power, many have predicted that it has a slim chance of staying on power for an extended period of time. For a number of reasons: 1) The TPLF is from Tigray, a region whose population is less than 7% of the population of the Empire. So the main source of the regime is a minority ethno-national group, the Tigree, which seems incapable of ruling the vast empire. 2) As demonstrated again and again, the regime was clearly rejected, from the start, by almost all areas outside of Tigray. 3) From the outset, it was evident that the regime was racist, undemocratic, and repressive, and can not possibly be embraced by any region of the population of the empire. 4) The people assigned to administer

the regions and the Federal Government are, and have always been incredibly incompetent. Yet, 18 years later, the regime is still on power. And there are no indications that a government change will take place any soon in the Empire. In this presentation we will analyze some of the factors that may have helped the regime stay in power against all odds.

External Legitimacy, Authoritarianism, and State Terrorism: The Triple Enemies of Peace and Development in Ethiopia

Asafa Jalata and Harwood Schaffer, University of Tennessee –Knoxville

Abstract: "Modern" Ethiopia has been created and maintained through the achievement of external legitimacy in the eyes of major interstate players. At the same time, the successive Abyssinian regimes have failed to achieve internal legitimacy among the more than 70 conquered ethnonations while maintaining some degree of legitimacy among the minority Abyssinian population. While authoritarian rule has been sufficient to maintain public order among the Abyssinian population, state-sponsored terror has been widely used in an attempt to control the conquered peoples, creating political instability. The achievement of stability in Ethiopia requires a democratic paradigm that includes decolonization, self-determination, and popular sovereignty.

The Plight of Women in War Times: Helping Women Survive War Crimes

H. Yusuf¹ & F. Abdulkadir², Ogaden Human Rights Committee (OHRC) Canada

Abstract: The Ogaden, also known as the Somali region of Ethiopia, homeland to ethnic Somalis, has a longstanding history of being contested territories. This paper will conduct a deeper analysis of the psychological and social ramifications of prolonged and continuous conflict and war have on women. As we have seen in many parts of the world, during war conflicts and particularly ethnic-based wars, women are used as pawns on a chessboard as collateral damage. They are raped, sexually assaulted, and killed. The following research paper and presentation will show how the Ethiopian army have systematically attacks women when they want to demoralize the general population in the Somali region.

This research paper will be divided into three sections: the first section will provide a brief context to the history of ethnic-based conflict in the Somali region in Ethiopia, focusing the critical role women have in the Somali community. Secondly, provide concrete examples of the atrocities that are committed to destroy communities through shaming the women via rape, and inflicting psychological pain, and extreme violence through cases of abused women. Finally, employing gender-based analysis, and feminist thought, a way to move forward to help these women will be put forward. For these women to heal and feel well adjusted and integrated back into the community their plight must be understood; acknowledged and mechanisms must be developed that provide these victims with opportunities which will instill a sense of recovery and one way to do this is to accept them as integral part of community,

¹ Huda Yusuf is a human rights activists, and one of the founding members of the Ogaden Human Rights Committee (OHRC) Canada

² Fowsia Abdulkadir is an independent researcher and human rights activists, and currently the Chairperson of OHRC Canada.

and create opportunities for them so that they can provide for their families and become once again productive members of society.

This research paper will conclude with some recommendations for the road ahead, and challenge all of us to be champions for these voiceless women. These women need us to take a stand and not let one more woman, girl be assaulted just because she is a female from the other ethnic group.

Obama's Foreign Policy Towards the Horn of Africa: Expectations, Possibilities, Probabilities

Seifudein Adem, PhD, Binghamton University, New York

Abstract: President Barack Obama's administration which came to office in January 2009 has already given some signals that it would not perpetuate the foreign policies of the previous administration. In this respect the break with the past is as clear as it was forceful even after allowing for the fact that certain changes do need time to mature and bear fruit. The new administration's foreign policy agenda in the Horn of Africa, if there will be any, are yet to be spelled out. This paper examines the structural constraints and opportunities for an active US foreign policy in the region.

Overcoming the Oromo Unity Challenge: An Application of the Advocacy Coalition Framework

Mohammed Chilalo, M.Sc., Washington DC, USA

Abstract: More than four decades have elapsed after the formal declaration of Oromo unity for purpose --*Bilisumma*. Massive detentions, tortures, killings, and disappearances conducted by the Ethiopian regime and its surrogate organizations, haven't erased this sacred purpose from the Oromo mind. The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and many other organizations that emerged thereafter galvanized the Oromo people to realize this common purpose. To our knowledge however, there is no comprehensive study conducted to assess how Oromo unity is treated in various Oromo organizations and what metaphor is used to translate this unity into *Bilisuma*. While the word unity is loosely understood among the Oromo public and its organizations, it is clear that every Oromo nationalist who wants to see the freedom of its people, who wants a free and dignified life for itself and for the future generations of Oromia can and must unite around the core values- *Bilisuma*. Using Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF), I will analyze and recommend the kind of unity needed in order to transform Oromo national struggle to the highest level and shorten its journey to *Bilisuma*.

PANEL III: REGIONAL: OROMO RELATIONS WITH OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS

Panel Organized by: Ezekiel Gebissa, Ph.D, Kettering University

Speakers:

Benti Getahun - The Oromo in Multiethnic Addis Ababa

Mohammed Hassen - The Relations of the Oromo with the Hareri

Tsega Etefa - Oromo-Somali Relations in the Nineteenth Century

Ezekiel Gebissa - From Animosity to Mutual Understanding: Oromo Relations with the Gumuz of the Didessa Valley.

Oromo communities have historically lived and interacted with other groups commercially and culturally. These interactions have resulted in conflict, accommodation, adaptation, and interdependence. The panelists will explore the nature of Oromo relations with different ethnic groups.

PANEL IV: OROMIA: RECENT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS**Comparing Disparities in Basic Needs for Social and Economic Development in Oromiya and Other Regions of Ethiopia**

Bichaka Fayissa, PhD, Middle Tennessee State University

Abstract: Meeting the minimum basic needs of society such as food security, health (access to safe drinking water, sanitation, immunization against common diseases such as measles, tuberculosis, smallpox, and other diseases), nutrition, education (school attendance), active participation in government, and housing is of a paramount goal and responsibility of any development focused government (governance indicator), particularly in the emerging economies. In spite of the fact that many parts of Oromia and the other regions of Ethiopia are endowed with vast natural resources, meeting the basic needs of the people has been a real challenge for the government over the past century. Using recently collected household survey data, this paper will explore the root causes of the unsatisfied basic needs after demonstrating the existing regional disparities in meeting the above listed basic needs. The unsatisfied basic needs have resulted in income inequality and recurring household poverty in all the regions, particularly Oromia. Based on the findings, some preliminary policy implications and recommendations will be offered.

Agrarians Laws in Oromia: Towards Understanding the Actual Normative Realm

Mekonnen Firew Ayano, Harvard Law School, Boston, Massachusetts

Abstract: Agrarian societies and their governments face hard questions of land laws and policies. Generally, there are two basic counteracting interests animating such questions. First, land is the source— usually the sole source, of livelihood for the agrarian households. No land, no food for most agrarian households. Further, some communities attach social and religious values to land. Land is often an expression of status and civic life. Second, land is the backbone of the agrarian economies and governments have to depend on land to stimulate and spur economic development. These two interests are often in tension, not to mention the ethnic and intercommunity diversities. Thus, agrarian land laws and policies are determined by a multiple of interests and variables that interact in a complex way that goes beyond economic considerations.

However, land issues could be generally seen from two perspectives: the communitarian and the commodification perspectives. My paper shows the dilemma and challenges of land policies based on these two approaches in the context of contemporary Oromia/Ethiopia. It argues that current debates about land policies, mainly the commodification arguments, underestimate the complexity of norms governing land access and use in Oromia/Ethiopia. Specifically, the advocates of land commodification in contemporary Oromia/Ethiopia fail to appreciate the nature of the existing land regimes and practices by assuming that “the state owns land”. I argue that this assumption is quite inaccurate. I shall show through diagnosis, analysis, and critique of various land regimes that there are multiple land norms and practices that negate the notion of “state ownership”. Also, informal and disguised land transaction is ubiquitous. The paper aims to urge the participants in the current issues of land policies of Oromia/Ethiopia to remap the debate and discussions on studies of norms, values and interests, in addition to the politics and economics of land, which actually predominantly animate the contemporary discourse. In short, this paper seeks to refute the conventional view among land scholars that “land is owned by the state” and urge future policy makers to take into account the diversity of norms, practices, and the underlying interests in designing land policies and laws.

I will also discuss the practice of state expropriations of agrarian lands around Finfine for agribusinesses and informal land transactions, as specific cases, to show the plurality and high malleability of state land laws. Also, these practices of expropriation and disguised land transactions indicate how the inaccurate notion of “state ownership” of land and the overall extant normative order harbors and breeds land kleptocracy. I believe if that inaccurate notion of “state ownership” is rectified and we realize, as I shall argue, that agrarians have constitutional property rights, we would have at least a juristic authority to challenge the current practices of expropriation, whereby agrarian lands could be taken for private use under the guise of “better development” by an unscrupulous land administration. In this regard, my paper argues for a proper consideration of the real norms and interest in the interest of making a fair and prudent land policy that restrains agrarian dislocation and yet spurs economic growth.

Challenges of Agriculture, Environment, and Sustainable Development in Oromiya Region

Lemessa Hailu, Saudi Arabia

Abstract: A rapid growth in population increases the demand and competition for food. In order to be able to feed its population and improve living standards, Oromia needs to increase its agricultural production. This can be accomplished either by increasing the size of its agricultural sector or expanding the use of modern technologies to increase productivity, or both. These developments, if not done in a sustainable manner, can have devastating consequences for the current and future generations. This paper looks at the challenges that Oromiya faces in meeting its strategic objectives while minimizing environmental degradation that accompanies increasing agricultural productivity. The prospects for increased agricultural productivity are also examined in the light of new opportunities in agriculture. The selective use of existing technologies that minimize environmental degradation in the process of achieving sustainable growth in agricultural productivity and the relevance of

socio-economic factors such as marketing and credit in facilitating sustainable increases in agricultural productivity, with minimum degradation to the environment, are also underlined.

Institutions Governing Local Community-Coffee Forest Relation in Yayo/Gaba-Dogi Protected Area, Southwest Ethiopia

Zewdie Jotte Tulu, Center for Development Research (ZEF) University of Bonn, Germany

Abstract: This paper analyzes the institutional setting rules and local community relations around coffee forest management in Yayo/Gaba-Dogi. Results derived from the study conducted in Yayo forest of Western Oromia show that the existing institutional setting is characterized by the lack of clear structure, objective focus on wild coffee biodiversity conservation and use, and absence of clear link among institutions at all levels. There are conflicting property rights and practically non-decentralized policies that mismatch with local contexts. The community is in conflict with district administration, Gaba-Dogi forest coffee conservation, and district agriculture and rural development offices on the application of the rules and regulations governing forest coffee as a protected area. The main causes of conflicts are the need to expand coffee farm, disagreement on ownership rights, the need for timber and construction material and prohibition of harvesting forest and NTFPs. The marginalization of the local community and their customary institutions has also aggravated the conflict. These have in turn become impediments for sustainable conservation and use coffee forest thereby aggravating its deforestation. Contextualized collaborative forest management or co-management-- with clear structure, objectives, and links with all relevant stakeholders--is suggested as an alternative institutional arrangement to ensure sustainable livelihood and conservation as well as manage conflicts.

HIV Epidemics in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Oromia

Shibru D Fufa, Walden University

Abstract: During the past couple of decades, the morbidity and mortality due to HIV/AIDS has grown in to pandemic proportions globally in general and in the sub-Saharan Africa in particular. Within the sub-Saharan regions, there are huge disparities in the magnitude of damage the disease caused including socioeconomic progress and loss of social capital. Due to its pandemic proportions, HIV/AIDS testing and case reporting has quickly been politicized so much so that the validity of some reports and the surveillance method used in generating those data to be questionable. This is particularly of huge concern in under reporting the real epidemics with little or no bias so that the imminent danger of under reporting the real epidemics is avoided.

The danger of under-reporting and lack of proper case-detection would be of paramount concern in sub-Saharan African countries in general and the Ethiopian empire in particular wherein the distribution of resources and access to health services is dictated by the government not the people. The use of biased data collection tools and hence biased health-promotion policies and systematic discriminatory practices had caused in the past and continues to cause an irreparable damage to the health wellbeing of the indigenous oppressed people in the Ethiopian empire such as the Oromo people.

The current HIV/AIDS epidemics and trends being reported by the government of Ethiopia is a case in point. This paper will use available data from databases such as the Demographic and Health Survey database and the UNAIDS database to demonstrate the regional disparities in reporting of the HIV/AIDS epidemics. It will also remark on the policy implications of such disparities and their consequences in terms under reporting the disease particularly in rural areas of Oromia and other comparable regions in the empire.

PANEL V: OROMIA: HISTORY

Oromia: A commercial Entrepot in the Nineteenth Century

Tsega Etefa, PhD, Department of History, Colgate University

Abstract: The main purpose of this paper is to look into the significance of commerce for pan-Oromo relations in the nineteenth century. By mainly using travel accounts, attempts will be made to analyze the conduct of commercial transactions in Oromia, regional interconnections between Oromia and other states, relations between the Oromo and foreign merchants, and the contributions of foreign travelers, missionaries and diplomats to the history of the Oromo nation.

Villagization: A Historical Look at Its Social, Environmental, Economic and Cultural Impact in Oromia

Taye F. Nadi, Washington DC

Abstract: This paper draws upon eyewitness accounts, government records and scarce existing scholarship to examine the impact of the large-scale “villagization” program implemented by the Dergue regime throughout most regions of Oromia in the late 1980s. It looks at the lasting negative consequences for the social and cultural life, the economic activity of the Oromo population that was the target of this largely undocumented effort to force millions of Oromo peasant farming communities to dismantle their houses and transport them to government-mandated new “villages” – usually at great distances from their animals and cultivated fields. The paper calls for attention to the unacknowledged legacies of this highly destructive program and suggests that it served as the forerunner to continuing policies of alienating the Oromo from their lands and resources.

PANEL VI: OROMO CULTURE, LANGUAGE, AND MEDIA

The Politics of Oromo Dress among the Afran Qallo

Peri Klemm, PhD, California State University, Northridge

Abstract: This presentation examines the dress of rural Afran Qallo Oromo women as a pliable medium used to communicate a political voice. Women use jewelry, textiles, hairstyle, and body markings to reflect meaningful and subversive connections to their communal beliefs and values. With the influx of social, political, and economic changes brought about during the last decades, I argue that women’s dress is one of the few remaining visual connections to the past used to assert an Oromo identity. While Afran Qallo women

today are redefining their individual tastes and priorities as newly imported materials flood the markets, their fashion statements are collectively governed by an indigenous aesthetic system and shared history.

Press Freedom in Ethiopia with Particular Reference to the Oromo People

Aregash Mekonnen Deressa, Former Staff of Bariisaa Newspaper

Abstract: Press freedom is the cornerstone of any democratic government. During the socialist regime, the press in Ethiopia essentially served as a propaganda machine for the party in power. After 1991, the press was free for about one year until TPLF realised that under free press and free and fair elections, it was going to lose power. Major opposition parties/political organisations were thus immediately declared terrorist organisations and all independent press critical of the government policies were either banned or their staff put behind bars on fabricated charges.

Since 1991/92, the Oromo based press has been even more suppressed than the other press establishments. For example, the Amhara based print press, although under significant harassment, still exists. *Urji* newspaper which, despite the heavy handed government actions managed to survive until 1995, was finally closed down, most of the editorial staff were kept prisoners of conscience for so long until they were finally released under the pressure from international humanitarian and press organizations but later escaped and became refugees. Oromo journalists who try to exercise their profession are harassed, tortured or indefinitely kept under detention (please see yearly reports by the Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch on Ethiopia.) The only mass media for the Oromo people today is the government controlled TV, radio and *Bariisaa*, the government owned Oromo language national newspaper.). Oromo journalists are not allowed to organise themselves and exercise their rights; no Oromo journalist is trusted and offered a decision making position in the government press. This paper will examine the challenges that the Oromo media are currently facing in Ethiopia.

Transforming Oromo News Media into the Oromo National Alternative Institution of Public Opinion

Habtamu Dugo, Independence Institute, Washington DC

Abstract: Over the last half decade, Oromo individuals, political and civil society organizations have launched several online media outlets out of desperate feelings of “serving as the voices of the voiceless Oromo people.” Of the sprawling number of the Oromo online media, some have managed to thrive on quality content, while others have become unregulated tools that have polarized the nascent Oromo public sphere.

This article will focus on exploring the significance of independent Oromo news and human rights websites as the new and alternative institutions that have been shaping public opinions. Particularly, the article critically analyzes Oromo new media’s role in human rights and political activism. It will intend to do this by drawing on the theoretical insights from Jürgen Habermas’ (1989) classic theory about ‘the structural transformation of the of the public

sphere'. It also draws on Herman and Chomsky's (2002) theory of the political economy of the media to clarify the concept of how market forces and governments control the media and thereby people's opinions on crucial social and economic issues.

Two reasons justify the relevance of critically analyzing the Oromo new media as alternative press institutions: (i) the Ethiopian government's control of telecommunication services, broadcast, print and online media for pure purposes of manufacturing propaganda, which has effectively led to the systematic banning of all other forms of independent Oromo media within Ethiopia; and (ii) contrary to public expectations, the first world's media (transnational televisions, radios, newspapers and magazines) have digressed from their publicist functions and turned into platforms for market forces and interests groups, who rarely want to address issues of human rights abuses and conflicts that are turning the Horn of Africa's environments into scorched battlefields. The Oromo public opinion has been crushed and silenced between the colossal forces of a national repressive government and global market interests. If national and international media platforms continue to ignore the plights of peoples in the Horn of Africa, then it becomes important to take the Oromo new media more seriously and to centralize and crystallize them into alternative institutions of public opinions.

The Importance of Youth Enculturation and Education to Reclaim Oromos' Leadership in the 21st Century

Salahadin (Daga) Abdulle, Washington State University, and Abdulsabur Jemal, Yale University

Abstract: All people in the world whether in traditional society or modern society, they have their own way of life which distinguishes one group from other. The way of life in the society, except some inevitable modification will remain as the cultural identity of that group which will be handed down to the next coming generation. Without knowledge of cultural identity that embodies moral, ethical, and aesthetic value of the society, the contemporary young generations can hardly maintain self-worth. In order to appreciate and protect the value of the society they came from, it is crucial for the young generation to learn their history and culture at the same time as they are trained for future leadership based on aesthetic Gadaa Value. IN this paper we will try to discuss the Gadaa system from youth perspective, what we should learn from Gadaa to prepare the contemporary young generation to future leadership, and what steps should be taken to reclaim Oromo's leadership.

PANEL VII: OROMIA: ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

Panel Organized by: Gobena Huluka, PhD, Auburn University

The Green Lake (Lake Koka) film (21 minutes) synopsis
Orlando von Einsiedel, Grain Media Ltd, UK

Abstract: When outsiders think of Ethiopia, images of drought and famine often spring to mind. However what few people know is that the country is currently experiencing almost double-digit economic growth and it has the fastest growing non-oil dependent economy in Africa. Unfortunately however, this economic growth has come at a cost to the environment. Lake Koka which lies 90km south of the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, is a water source relied upon by thousands of people, yet the water is polluted from industrial effluent and the algal blooms that thrive in the contaminated water. Being the only source of water in the parched highland landscape for miles around, the polluted water is having terrible consequences on the lakeside communities who have no choice but to rely on it for drinking, washing and cooking.

This film investigates the plight of the people surrounding Lake Haraobi; however, it also looks at the trade offs countries like Ethiopia must make when it comes to pushing ahead with fast economic development (that could potentially lift millions out of poverty) vis-a-vis protecting the environment and those who depend on it. Following the film, I will briefly discuss this 'interplay between economic development vis-a-vis protecting the environment and those who depend on it' and then hold a question and answer session.

Notes of A Native Son: Koka before the Dam and the Lake

Jimma D. Tufa, Washington, DC

Abstract: Qoqaa before the damming of the Hawas River was a pristine ecological niche used by Jille clan of the Oromo nation for time immemorial as seasonal farming and grazing pasture for their livestock. The Hawas-Aqaaqii Rivers basin has been the lifeline to Oromos as is the River Nile to the Egyptians. From its source in the Hochochaa Mountains, Hawass flows south through fertile hills and valleys of Central Oromia giving life and livelihood to farmers, pastoralists and others before it changes its course and flows northeast and empties into lake Abee. This natural and mystical flow of the River Hawass has created unparalleled beauty of ecological niches in the Great Rift Valley. Seasonal wetlands, flood plains, and desert oasis are the fantastically ethereal creations of this River and its tributaries.

Qoqaa was a seasonal wetland, and in some areas, flood plains that nurtured the habits, beliefs, and all other cultural ethos of the Jille clan of Oromo nation. During the dry seasons, Jille people migrated to Qoqaa from the surrounding highlands to farm short season crops, i.e. garbanzo beans etc... Jilles also used the flood- plains as grazing pasture for the multitudes of livestock that they are known for.

These cycles of livelihood of the Jille people were rudely interrupted by the Imperial government during the mid 1950s when, as payment for war reparation, the Italian government offered the Imperial regime to build a hydroelectric power station. It was decided by the regime to dam the Hawas River and flood Qooqa wetlands. The Jille people were told by the Imperial regime to evacuate their land without compensation. There were scattered resistance, but the whole Imperial administrative and police apparatus was employed to remove the Jille people from their beloved Qoqaa wetlands and plains. The process of damming was thus complete and Qoqaa was flooded to become a man made lake- Lake Qoqaa!

In this paper, I will explore and ponder about the paradise lost, Qoqaa, before the damming of the Hawas River from stories and narratives told by grand parents, aunts and uncles, - memories passed down to the generations of Jille youngster who never saw the great beauty and perfection of that lost land.

Lake Koka: The Challenges of Bio-Remediation and Clean Water

Mardaasa Addisu, MTSA and Purdue University

Lake Koka is an estimated 50 miles south of Finfinne (Addis Ababa), and is very dangerously polluted. This has rendered the water source as unusable for many that depend on it for daily living. Sources of pollution were identified as coming from Awash Dam of 1957 stagnation of the water upstream of Lake Koka. Further compounding the issues were industrial development without industrial effluent waste treatment. Many of the industries such as a leather Tannery, foundries and flower producers have released effluent waste streams into Lake Koka's water source. Ethiopia has blatantly stated that they will not enforce environmental laws since they see their economic development as a priority over our people. The industrial waste has caused significantly high levels of heavy metal. Scientific studies² from 2003 documented high levels in watermelons grown in the area. The levels were Chromium-129 at $\mu\text{g l}^{-1}$, Iron at $1840 \mu\text{g l}^{-1}$, Nickel at $107 \mu\text{g l}^{-1}$ and Lead at $26 \mu\text{g l}^{-1}$.

Lack of effluent waste treatment has resulted in high Nitrates and Phosphates in Lake Koka. As a result, Lake Koka is overcome by toxic green algae. According to Analysis by Environmental Research Center at the University of Durham, Lake Koka's green algae are some of the most toxic form. Consequently, the residence that depend on Lake Koka for water are suffering from gastroenterological disease, liver disease, liver cancer as well as malaria, cholera and other water born diseases. One resident lost 6 of her children and her husband. Many others have lost family due to the contaminated water supply.

Bio-remediation and heavy metal removal is required to bring the water supply to safe and useable form. Providing clean adequate water supply will help resolve many other problems including but not limited to mortality, poverty reduction, literacy. We are working on this project with Purdue Universities Global Engineering Program and individual Scientists who work for NASA. This project will be to implement water management system for the residents of Lake Koka through partnerships with research institutions as well as NGOs and the UN.

Possible Legal Options: Lake Koka and the Awash River Basin Pollution

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Abstract: Since at least 2005, Pittards PLC, one of the world's major leather processing companies, has been responsible for the total management of Ethiopia's largest state owned leather production facility-Ethiopia Tannery Share Company. Chemical waste from the tannery has poisoned Lake Koka and the Awash River, destroying the ecosystem, and causing loss of lives and property for the area residents. The once-pristine lake is now filled with toxic green algae (*microcystis algae*). A scientific study conducted on the level of pollution

concluded heavy metal concentrations in the extract of watermelon grown around Lake Koka contained alarmingly high concentrations of chromium, iron, nickel and lead. Whereas international human rights and environmental laws guarantee the right to a safe environment, the pleas of the people affected by this unfolding ecological disaster have fallen on deaf ears. This paper examines the environmental laws of Ethiopia and what legal redress can be pursued on behalf of the people affected by this environmental tragedy.

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