THE METAPHYSICS OF FRACTAL POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY
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PART TWO:
FRACTAL POLITICS: THE CASE FOR ETHIOPIA

I. Focusing Issues and Questions
In my first article on "fractal political philosophy," I have stated, "[I]t is only because of my search for a solution to our cyclical suffering in the hands of contemptible and brutal leaders that I came up with new political philosophy that might help us break away from this loop of suffering and underdevelopment." And further on I have stated, "At the preliminary stage, my effort will focus in establishing the individual as the most important player in this new fractal political philosophy." Those statements and others have instigated people to ask three important generic questions dealing with points about 1) the "newness" of fractal political philosophy; 2) the magnitude or degree of importance of the individual; and 3) the role of the state of Ethiopia. The first question mainly deals with questions of semantics and is not as important as the second and third questions that deal with equality, justice, economic and political development, and decency.

Some of my readers of my first article on "fractal political philosophy" were concerned about the implication of "fractal" theories in social and economic issues because of the possible implications or emphasis on individuality and/or the reduction and transfer of important public issues into questions of private matter. The initial problem with such concern has to do with basic understanding of what is meant by "fractal" concept. The theory takes its inspiration from fractal geometric structures and the concept of "complex adaptive system," both interpreted in such a manner to explain economic, political, and social structures in a non-linear or hierarchical manner in anticipation of finding long term solutions.

I have adopted a holistic approach when I discussed several issues in connection with Ethiopians from all background and ethnicity. I have generalized statements that may only be true in particular communities in Ethiopia and not true in others. This way of writing, on the surface, may look like very misleading since Ethiopia is a multi-cultural society and certain values or activities may not hold true in all of the many cultures and communities of Ethiopia. I avoided making a series of conditional statements because such approach cuts into the very essence of the argument and minimizes the true import of my statements. I rather assume that Ethiopia is like a mathematical set of many members/parts, and as such the characteristic of such parts is the characteristic of the set itself. At least for the duration of this article, let us not forget the fact that Ethiopia is an aggregation of several parts, but also a lot more than the parts, best characterized as a synergy of the many in the power of a singularity or unity.

Since the issue of newness has been raised by some of my readers about my use of fractal concepts in Ethiopian politics as a new approach, I will briefly discuss why I wrote about "fractal philosophy" as a "new" approach to solve our social, political, and economic problems. It seems the offending word was the word "new" because it suggested something extraordinary to some people. This qualifying adjective is simply a descriptive statement of fact and not a normative judgment. It meant that the fractal concept, which has its base in mathematics, is being used in political and philosophical understanding of events taking place in a particular nation of Ethiopia for the first

time--a simple ordinal identification. The application of fractal concepts to Ethiopia's political situation is a "new" use of the concept. I checked tens of thousands of entries as follows:
- under the word "fractal" over three million;
- under the words "fractal philosophy" about forty three thousand;
- under the words "fractal political philosophy" about eleven thousand;
- under the words"African fractal political philosophy" about eight thousand
- under the words "Ethiopian fractal political philosophy" about eighty.
I searched also the Library of Congress online data banks, with different search engines with similar results.

Despite the staggering numbers of items identified by the research tools or servers I used, through proper search command, a kind of algorithm, it is possible to eliminate millions of entries that are simple cross references or word identifications, and as a result the number of actual essays (books) on the subject of "fractal political philosophy" seems to be quite limited almost non-existent. There was some effort by philosophy departments in some universities to link the concept of "fractal" to the social sciences, which attempt seems to have been inarticulate and cursory. What I read from seminar papers, departmental announcements et cetera attest to the fact that there is a lack of intellectual conceptualization to formulate the interface stage between concept and discipline. Articles or books whether in a form of structural analysis of the application of concepts of "fractal" to political philosophy or a generic discussion of the subject would not be that difficult to a researcher to find.

Thus, the above large numbers of entries are meaningless if used to compute the number of actual works dealing with fractal political philosophy. In fact over 99.9% can be discarded as non-responsive. Most of the items entered were cross references for one or the other triggering words. And a large percentage of that limited number of essays dealing with the concept of "fractal" deals exclusively with subjects like mathematics, economics, computer program, chemistry, biology, and art (design). In other words the actual number of items written on "Ethiopian fractal political philosophy" comes down to a set consisting of a single article--my article.

I would recognize here a couple of individuals who took up the concept of "fractal" in an African context, but for a different analysis than mine. Abdul K. Bangura and Ron Eglash [1] in separate works have discussed "fractal" concepts in an African setting. Moreover, their discussion focused on mathematical questions (in design, art; knowledge base) with cursory reference to sociological issues dealing with extended African family and aggregation of tribal strictures--topics far from political philosophy of any sort.

Now, let me focus your attention on the more important concerns and issues that I believe must be discussed in earnest for some time. There are other diversionary schemes being pushed by Western governments such as the moronic forum on "African Unity." A discussion of that sort is totally anachronistic and amateurish to bring up at this stage of African political and economic development. There is such a back-log of unresolved heap of problems that it is immoral to come up with a discussion topic as "African Unity" at this time. African leaders could not even handle their "allotted" territories of the Continent let alone handle highly unitary and infinitely more complex

structures and operations.

The basic ethical standards in all of human communities have always been about both individual and communal interests. I have not come across any community where only one set of ethical norms favoring the community or the individual exclusively has been the case. It is with such fact as background that I introduced the idea that the promotion of ethical principles to be the main function of a government. The reason for this shift in the role of the Ethiopian government is to break the cycle of violence and poverty that has characterized life in Ethiopia for so long. In a way, it is a positive step of self-empowerment by the people of Ethiopia taking charge of their own lives and not waiting for any government to provide them with what is inherently their own to begin with. It is in this sense of change of trajectory and adoption of a new role for a government specifically and clearly articulated as such that I claim the fractal approach I have adopted to both philosophy and Ethiopia is new.

We Ethiopians have wasted almost fifty years focusing all of our effort and having adopted the wrong premise that political rights and economic development could only be achieved by going after political leaders and by introducing alien political structure replacing existing systems to the exclusion of anything else. At least our struggle should have been two-pronged: one group focusing on building the integrity and ethical strength of the individual Ethiopian, and the second group focusing on dislodging the leadership. I am not undermining what poverty can do to a person's self-worth or life, nor am I overlooking the fact that even a minute spent in poverty and oppression is a lifetime experience that no one should go through. In my effort to refocus our attention on what we can do as individuals for each other before we attempt to change the "big picture," I am not conceding and accepting as final a defeat in our struggle against an oppressive government and brutal leaders. On reflection, as a matter of personal assessment of the current situation, I do not think much of the opposition's present or past effort to dislodge leaders; we would have been far more effective had we invested even half the time [i.e., we wasted thirty years fighting Haile Selassie, Mengistu and now Meles] just on building the individual Ethiopian. The way we have brought about change and removed Ethiopian leaders skewered us in a perpetual self-mutilating loop from which we will never escape as long as our aim is simply to change just personalities.

It is not because of any sympathy for past dictators or current ones that I am critical of our method of struggle or the way we set our priorities. The emphasis we have placed on the acquisition of state power should have been a secondary item rather than the primary place we have accorded it. It is quite disconcerting to me when I read in programs of several political organizations unabashed provisions dealing with issues of the acquisition of state power. With this in mind, let me investigate the fractal alternative that I believe is a way out of our predicament.

It is in the later stages of development of the notion of the "state" as of 16th Century that ethical standards were decidedly disassociated from the function of the state in Western nations. By contrast Ethiopian political leaders had always throughout Ethiopian history separated the secular power of their governments form the spiritual leadership that was properly assigned to religious leaders. However, ethics/morality was never disassociated from the power of the Sovereign. This may have to do with the concept of "kingship" as divinely endowed to the individual, and the Sovereign was

seen as God's instrument through whom His divine purpose is carried out. Even though the Ethiopian king or emperor was claimed to have been anointed by God to rule over Ethiopia, there was a validation process for the anointment process that was controlled by the Church leaders. It was an amazingly sophisticated system that worked quite well for thousands of years helping preserve the viability, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence of Ethiopia even though some of the most tumultuous history of conflict and war in the world took place in Ethiopia.

II. The Individual in a Fractal Society
A. Childhood and Social Integration

The manner Ethiopian children [2] are brought up and how they are treated in schools by their teachers [the few lucky ones who attend schools], neighborhood communities, and society in general determine on how Ethiopians relate to their fellow citizens, and how they handle disagreements, confrontations, and authorities when they become adults. Instead, generations of Ethiopians had to suffer irreversible damage to their self-esteem and humanity in the hands of parents or their caregivers, and "sadistic" teachers and principals all over Ethiopia. It is in fact amazing that Ethiopia is not populated by millions of neurotic (even psychotic) individuals considering the prevalent degree of child abuse.

In books and articles, I have discussed the harm inflicted on Ethiopian children by dysfunctional families acting as the most destructive breeding ground for traumatized, antisocial and insecure children who in time grow up to become controlling and manipulative adults. It is quite sad to watch thirty, forty years old adult Ethiopian men and women acting with timidity and insecurity like ten year old boys and girls in front of people. Such behavior is a result of years of abuse in the hands of parents, teachers, and the community in general of defenseless children.

The fractal structure of normal activities such as personal relationships, earning a living (work), family life, child rearing et cetera at the individual level has tremendous effect on large structures dealing with the power of the state and government leaders. All children encounter the world first in their interaction with their parents or caretakers, and as they grow older their interaction expands and they are initiated into becoming a useful and important member of the larger community. Not discounting the importance of genetics in the building of personality, nevertheless, the first few years of interaction with parents and caretakers are extremely crucial in the formation of the character of children. The violence and abuse children encounter in their formative years last them for the rest of their lives. I have thought of this particular problem for years.

In my own life the strong memories I have are those from early childhood feelings of being helpless against the violence at home, in grade school, and on play grounds. I have talked to very many Ethiopians/friends who seem to be in denial trying to paint a rosy picture of family life and grade school experience free from violence and abuse. Unless we face head on this evil that has stunted the development of very many ethical values of millions of Ethiopians, we will never solve our economic and political underdevelopment. We must also accept the fact that next to parents and early childhood caretakers, no one is more important in the life of a person like grade school teachers. Students learn not only science, mathematics, and history from their teachers, but they also learn from the behavior of their teachers how to behave in society. Such lessons are far more

important than mere technical knowledge because students learn from good teachers how to be good human beings and responsible citizens.

In all of my essays, the individual is acknowledged not only as a means, but also as an end. For those familiar with Kantian ethics this might remind them of the "formula of the end in itself," which idea is not an innovation, but only an articulation by Kant of an idea/fact that has a rather long tradition and is to be found in all societies in some form or another. In fact, I consider such ideation instinctual, and deeply embedded in every human being who ever existed. I believe it comes with the package that may be identified as self-awareness. In general, when it comes to questions of human rights, I suggest that we dispense with the question of crediting to a western philosophy/philosopher, or western influence principles or ideas dealing with basic human rights.

If we cannot see "the individual" as an agent of civilization, of communal life, or of family life, it would be impossible to think of civilization, communal life, or family life at all. By the same token, if we have not accepted the autonomy and the individuality of "a person," there would have been no community. The inverse is also true; it is mind boggling to think of "the individual" independently existing without a civilization, a communal life, or a family. The question to be resolved is where to strike a balance that would result in bringing out the best result for the individual and for society. All this polemic is elementary, but need be stated.

One can easily fall into cyclical argument trying to figure out where to start: with the individual or with society. Since this "exercise" has no "reality," let us work with some thought-experiment focusing on the one road that may branch out and develop into constructive systems that will give us tremendous benefit. If we start with the assumption that the community is of greater importance than the individual, we might never go beyond the infancy of the individual for the individual as a child could be discarded for any number of reasons by the community. It is important to remember that both in the past and at the present time a form of infanticide is practiced in both developed and undeveloped nations. Abortion in developed nations terminates tens of millions of fetuses every year, and neglect and starvation kills even more millions of children in undeveloped nations.

On the metaphysical aspect of this thought-experiment, one can bring into consideration the added fact that both past and recent history is littered with infantile civilizations or civilizations that deteriorated back into their infancy because of overwhelming distortions as a result of shifts that set communal importance to override the importance of the individual. In fact, the present world crisis is the result of distortions coming from such camps. The losers are those communities that have undermined individual rights and submerged their societies in totalitarian religiosity of one kind or another.

The danger of putting the community ahead of the individual results in situations far more dangerous compared to a system where the individual climbs the arduous ladder of power and turns against the community. In other words systems are far more difficult to change than individual dictatorships. True, the brutality of some dictators such as Adolf Hitler, Saddam Hussein, Mengistu Hailemariam et cetera has no measurement for its depth of evil, but one must remember that those dictators were hiding behind ideologies that gave overwhelming precedent to communal interest above and over

individual rights. On the other hand, if we start with the individual as our starting point, we do not run the risk of infanticide or stagnation right away. However, one need not get into this form of chicken-egg dilemma. At a certain developmental stage, the individual is wholly dependant on parents, family, and then the community. The initial stage of socialization sustains the physical well being of the individual, and also constructs his/her identity to a stage that the individual will be open to several possibilities where the individual's free will comes into play.

The worst we can say of unfettered individualism as a societal ideology is that it might deteriorate into an aristocracy with tyranny as one aspect of its deformity, and in our own time-line into an elitist and unbelievably corrupt political and economic system. It has been pointed out by several philosophers including Adam Smith, Friedrick Hayek et cetera that self-interest is more of a preservative of communal tranquility rather than an agent of disequilibrium. Of course the former is coming from a totally different trajectory of compassion for the poor, and against the pre-industrial crude capitalism of exploitation and monopoly, while the later is simply fearful of the Soviets socialist takeover of individuality and enterprise that may result in perpetuating poverty and oppression rather than growth and freedom. Though their approach is crude to my test, it has some merit in as far as we consider "self-interest" as part of the essential preliminary stage(s) of human social development only. Beyond the initial stages of communal development, no matter how well we argue for individual liberty, such "liberty" will simply get corrupted into greed and hedonism unless tempered with communal interest as an essential aspect of the individual's mental, physical, and moral development and ultimate survival. A clear example of such deterioration can be seen in the absurdities that surround Nozick's extremism in his libertarian ideas.

For example, in Christian ethics, the admonishment of the Christ to us all is to love our neighbors as much as ourselves. Mind you, even the Christ did not instruct us to love our neighbors more than ourselves. Thus, the validation of the individual is the building block of all civilized communities, but always tempered and checked by communal concerns. I am not advocating naïve Rousseauesque individualism, or unfettered capitalism in any form. As a matter of fact, I hold the opposite view. For example, I see certain non governmental structures such as the World Bank, the IMF et cetera as tools that further help the exploitation of poor and weak people around the world by huge multinational corporations and interests. And the political as well as economic justification to support those large and powerful structures mainly is presented as the "globalization" of the movement of capital. That is a euphemistic description of the old "colonialism" resurrected in new dresses. How about a non-exploitative movement of labor from under developed nations to the developed nations? What was needed was democratic governance and economic empowerment through fractal structures that could meet the needs of the people who needed the most help.

B. Social Responsibility and Paying Debts
When I say those of us educated in Ethiopia (at least for our first degree) owe Ethiopia much, I am not speaking figuratively or in the abstract. I mean we, each one of us, owe real money expended to educate us by the people of Ethiopia. This is not some metaphysical money-debt owed based on some legal abstraction, but real wealth created through the blood and sweat of millions of Ethiopians spent on our behalf. What have we done to repay that money? Except for the occasional thirty, forty, fifty dollars we grudgingly throw in collection boxes for famine relief, we have not paid back our

debt. It is even worse when we consider Ethiopian physicians and others well paid professionals who are very successful living in million-dollar mansions, contributing so negligible a fraction of what was expended to train and educate them. Especially in case of physicians their excuse of political persecution for being in the West is utterly nonsensical, for they are a pampered lot back in Ethiopia.

It is Quixotic to me to witness physicians from the Western world volunteering (Doctors Without Borders, *Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF)*) to help the millions of destitute, starving, and very ill Ethiopians back in our Homeland, while Ethiopian physicians are running away in droves to the West and ending up building a fantasy life of luxury in the West. It is especially hurtful when one considers most of these Ethiopians grew up in modest homes and some in single-room shacks and dilapidated tukuls, thus are familiar first hand with the deprivation and needs of most Ethiopians. Of course, there are exceptions; there are few Ethiopian physicians and other professionals who try to help Ethiopian refugees and immigrants in their new homes in the West, but that is a drop of compassion (delivered at times with much fanfare) in a sea of indifference and betrayal.

Other groups of immigrants whose contributions are greatly sought after back in Ethiopia are our Church Fathers including the Patriarch and the Abuns. Their search for safety is quite contradictory to their vows of service and commitment to follow in the footsteps of the Savior, the Christ, symbolized in His painful walk bearing His heavy cross to his crucifixion at Golgotha. I am not denying the fact that our great Church Fathers do help us (Orthodox Christians and others) by keeping Ethiopian communities together out in the West; however that could have been done through proper evangelist structure coming from the Mother Church not as a result of the act of rebellion, dissent, or fight. I am not endorsing the election or the leadership of the current Patriarch of the Church of Ethiopia. However, I believe religious hierarchical matter should not be handled the way political fighting is done by politicians who most often turnout to be no better than street thugs. I hold our Church Fathers to high standards and expect greater degree of sacrifice than I expect from Ethiopian politicians.

C. Raising a Labor Force and Work Ethics

The focus of the fractal method suggested herein is on the idea that we give as much importance what happens at the individual and family level as much our focus on large government structures. In the fractal methodology there is an acceptance that government structures are direct reflections of the activities of the individual and the individual's family in a nation. If there is sufficient attention paid to the individual and the family, the state structure will take care of itself. There are a number of simple steps that can be taken by individual citizens to insure that their children are not victims of violence and abuse in the first few years of their lives. This is a new approach in the sense that there is a very drastic change of emphasis on small structures as opposed to large ones such as governments.

Fractal philosophy has profound explanatory power when it comes to changing the attitude of most Ethiopians about physical work that involves even marginal physical engagement. Respect of physical "work" as a part of communal life need be inculcated at an early age. There is dignity in any work. It must be considered as part of the induction of children into society as responsible and respected members. I am not saying Ethiopians are lazy. Far from that, I believe that Ethiopians are

among the hardest working people in the world. You will not find that many communities around the world facing up to the types of hardship Ethiopians face as part of their daily routine. However, Ethiopian farmers, daily laborers et cetera go about their work grudgingly, and who would not under similar circumstances. What I am questioning is their attitude to "work" given a choice. As a matter of fact, certain types of professions like working as blacksmith, potter, *qoda-faqi*, et cetera were most frowned upon occupations and their practitioners were shunned and ostracized from the larger community. In fact, in traditional Ethiopia, if a man or a woman is a blacksmith or potter, such person is considered to have the evil-eye, a *budda*, and feared by the community, and forced to live in separate communities far from the general public.

Other than the fact of the desire for individual independence, there is also the desire to avoid physical work, an attitude inherited from a culture that seems to have negative perception of labor. Being a *zebegna* seems to be the most desirable occupation in urban centers around Ethiopia. There is not much physical engagement in being a *zebegna* except the occasional opening of gates for the "master's" car. Some Ethiopian communal behavior seems to suggest that in the eyes of such public "begging" is preferred to physical labor. One can write much on the psychology and sociology of the work habit of Ethiopians. From my own "unscientific" observation in Washington, it seems that many Ethiopian immigrants seem to prefer jobs that require less physical exertion. That may be one reason why one finds more Ethiopians in jobs that require less physical labor. There are more Ethiopians working as doormen, parking lot attendants, restaurateurs et cetera more than Ethiopian construction workers. Of course, there are tens of thousands of Ethiopians who are professionals, such as medical doctors, engineers, accountants, entrepreneurs et cetera too.

The Ethiopian education system and core curriculum emphasized non-vocational courses and did not introduce children to courses that concentrated or encouraged students to be engaged in activities that are physical. Even sport is limited because of proper infrastructure and facilities. We ought to encourage contests and awards that glorify physical labor. This could be done both at the family-community level and at the national or state level. For example, every Ethiopian child at a young age should be inducted into a profession, in other words become a member and learn the craft in his or her pastime, just for fun. In my own childhood, the one impression that remained with me to this day is the fascination I have with handicraft work. As a young boy of six or seven years old I used to sneak out to a neighborhood black-smith's workshop, and I used to watch for hours end mesmerized by the glowing coal and the rhythmic bellowing as air was pumped by a colorful assistant who used to make faces at me as he goes about his work. Much later I learned that he was merely five years older than me. The most important part to me was watching the master ironsmith shaping scrap steel and iron like pieces of paper into all kinds of familiar household items. It was magical. In my young eyes he was a "god" bringing to life fascinating objects.

III. The Role of the State in a Fractal Political Philosophy

There are certain indicators we can use to see if large political structures are reflective of intimately valued ethical standards derived from individual horizontal relationships. Trade or labor unions and professional associations and to a greater extent private clubs (*mahibers, eders*) are very important intermediary structures that are highly valued in fractal methodology. Where there are an abundance of such subsets, it is an indication that the state's structure will be also highly reflective of the

community and the individual. These structures or subsets are not something new to most state structures, but are being appreciated here in different light hermetically without any hemorrhaging into some form of political ideology.

The state as a corporate entity, which is distinct from the sovereign, is a modern concept. Even Machiavelli, who is thought of as the father of "Political Science," did not make a clear demarcation between the state and the sovereign. And much later, when Louis XIV declared "L'etat, c' est Moi," he was not really exaggerating his importance in the political power structure of the time, but merely stating the obvious. Even now, for some traditional societies there is no such distinction; however, in some cases such distinction or separation has occurred much later. [For example, the 1960 Civil Code of Ethiopia makes reference to the fact that the Government of Ethiopia is a legal entity on its own separate from the Emperor, and such concept was as alien as anything that could be imagined vis-à-vis Ethiopia.] Starting in mid Twentieth Century, with the rise of Fascism, Nazism, and Socialism the state became the one single force that mattered in national political structures. In the 1960 a large number of former colonies became independent states; they were established *prima feci* as "states" without any consideration as to the legitimacy of political authorities. This lack of legitimacy of the political power structure was the real reason why so many governments of new nations in Africa ended up being overthrown by military leaders leading to the current mess of African nations.

It is often argued that the state plays a far more important role as an agent of change, economic and political development, and in the preservation of civil society in "Third World" nations than in nations that already have advanced political and economic systems. Thus, most liberation or freedom struggles are aimed at replacing state power structures by replacing or overthrowing governments. The most recent and much acclaimed tool is the "democratization" process involving the drafting of constitutions and holding periodic elections, and adopting "market" economy system. These novel undertakings require large structural changes in order to be of some effect, and that is where the problem is. For example, elections inevitably create losers and winners, and the losers could not be absorbed into existing social and economic structures away from public offices because those essential secondary structures (social and economic) are not yet developed and in place such that losers can wait for another day to win an election. Rather what is created is another cycle of freedom and liberation fighters by the losers and their tag-ons.

It is in this situation that I am claiming the virtue of fractal political philosophy in dealing with monumental political and economic problems faced by developing nations. The one important feature of this approach is the acceptance of the idea that there is no compelling need for violent conflicts in trying to dislodge existing state structure and leadership in order to bring about desired economic development and democratic government. Such changes could be achieved at the individual-family-community level with enduring results without recourse to violence. In other words students, agitators, liberation or freedom movements were not exactly on the right track in their great effort and sacrifice by directly engaging government forces for leadership of the nation. Both political and economic changes would have been possible with less death and destruction had leaders of popular movements focused on horizontal change of relationships first rather than concentrate all of their resources fighting to change vertical structures.

The role played by the Ethiopian Teachers Association (ETA) for the last thirty years could be used as a great example to illustrate how fractal methodology would have been utilized with much more effect than the crude struggle waged by ETA's leadership for political power so far. In Ethiopia, there were two important events in the last thirty years 1) the 1975 Military takeover of the government of Haile Selassie, and 2) the 1991 TPLF/EPRDF "liberation" of Ethiopia kicking out what remained of Mengistu's brutal military government after Mengistu run out of the country in fear. In the first watershed event, Ethiopian teachers overwhelmingly supported the military takeover to the extent of becoming agents of the military in hunting down dissenters. Of course that marriage of convenience did not last long, a few years into the rule of Mengistu, teachers were victimized too and their union or association fully controlled as part of the political structure of a totalitarian government. In the second situation, after the TPLF/EPRDF took power, the fate of teachers along with other professionals underwent far more complex processes. Thus, I shall concentrate more in laying down foundational material to help build the case for horizontal fractal structural change.

IV. Structural Weaknesses of Unions and Professional Associations

The Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) and its successor government of Meles Zenawi have been anti-union, and have tried to destroy both CETU and ETA for the last thirteen years. The difficulties faced by the leaders of these associations have been a topic of extensive discussion both in Ethiopia and in the Ethiopian communities in foreign countries. The leaders of these associations such as Dawi Ibrahim [3] (the President of CETU), Taye Wolde Semayat (the President of ETA) and Gemoraw Kassa [4] (the Secretary General of ETA), have articulated the dispute between their organizations and the Ethiopian government. They have also addressed concerned members as well as the general public in different forums both in Ethiopia and abroad. They have provided their audience with clear pictures of the type of brutal persecution suffered by them personally and their organizations in the hands of officials of the governments of Ethiopia. Their interviews and press releases were truthful, believable and to the point. Nevertheless, the solution pursued by those leaders did not materialize for the simple reason that it lacked the structural strength of a popular movement.

The controversy between labor unions (professional associations) and the TGE on the issue of the role of the government in the organization of unions quickly turned into a political power struggle. The EPRDF took over the government of Ethiopia in May of 1991, and right away dismantled the power base of the defunct government of Mengistu - the WPE. The WPE was organized as the party of workers which included most everybody. However, membership was on the basis of individual registration, and there was no membership of unions or any other organization as such. The WPE was declared by the EPRDF and by TGE to be a criminal organization [5] and its office was closed, and its officials disbanded and some were put under arrest. In fact, one of the criteria for promotion, and government appointment to executive and ministerial office was the fact that the appointee was not a member of the WPE. However, such standards were not applied consistently to all similarly situated individuals. [6] Identical decision was also taken against the leaders of urban dwellers and peasants associations. The WPE was the backbone of the previous government, its leaders were officials of Mengistu's Ethiopian government, and thus it was necessary to dismantle a subversive pseudo-governmental organization at that point in time.

It is very misleading to portray labor unions as innocent victims of the current Ethiopian government before looking into the background of the development of unions during the previous government. The defunct unions had in their ranks individuals who have committed crimes against innocent citizens in their heyday during the time of the brutal dictatorship of Mengistu. As part and parcel of the WPE, union leaders manipulated the members to rally behind Mengistu's political decisions. However, this does not mean that the current Ethiopian government can commit similar crimes of Bolshevism, infiltration and control of the leadership of unions, in the manner Mengistu did. This is the background of the development of future political fallout between labor and the Ethiopian government.

In 1991-92 period, the Ethiopian work force was very amenable for restructuring and reorganization of the unions. The government stalled for a while because of the fact that it did not have a clear idea and policy on how to go about solving the problem of labor organizations. One problem has to do with the caliber of the individuals who were entrusted to deal with labor issues. Under an ad hoc committee the new organizational effort by industrial and service establishments were started. This lead to an immediate confrontation between the TGE and groups who had a certain perspective not favorable to the political policy that was adopted by the TGE in regard to the issue of the independence of Eritrea. There was also tremendous competition to fill the power gap left open due to the dismissal of all labor leaders installed by the previous regime which made it extremely difficult for the new officials of the TGE entrusted with the responsibility of reorganizing the workers.

Even with all these difficulties the initial response of workers/labor to the effort of the new government to reorganize the labor force was favorable. It seems that the controversy was started by overreaching official of the TGE who tried to install individuals whom they thought would be supportive, without question or deliberation, of the new leaders. The Ethiopian government started its attack and manipulative effort in order to get rid of the leadership of both the ETA and CETU because they were independent minded and that they were not the type of leadership that could be dictated to by Meles and his subordinates to support and participate in the Constitution drafting fiasco of 1994. This conflict ultimately resulted in the long imprisonment of ETA's President, Taye Wolde Semayat, who was released from his long imprisonment only a year ago.

Another reason why Ethiopians in general and labor union members in particular tend to be confrontational rather than cooperative with Ethiopian governments may have to do with the type of attitude and life-style displayed by government officials starting from the aristocratic rigidity of Haile Selassie's time to the flashy materialism of Meles Zenawi's "court." Soon after the EPRDF took over power in 1991, for example, EPRDF leaders were installed in the government power structure, they demanded the same "pomp and circumstances" and the "red carpet" treatment of traditional Ethiopia handed down from the time of Emperor Haile Selassie. Former guerrilla leaders were transformed overnight into government officials, and their first "official act" was to jump onto the fleet of expensive cars left behind by the military regime, and move into the expensive villas vacated by the former officials of Mengistu. In other words, conspicuous consumption of the worst kind was the prevailing conduct of those "freedom fighters" who just arrived into towns and cities in

dusty slippers and modest attire. The transformation was quite dramatic. Most importantly, it sent the wrong signal to the general population that nothing has changed except personalities. There was no reason for ordinary Ethiopians to change their mistrust of officials, or to change their attitude, work habit, relationships et cetera.

On the question of statesmanship, when EPRDF came into town it got suckered into associating itself with the *Mehal Sefari* individuals who undermined all grassroots movements because they knew that when power devolves to ordinary citizens their influence will be diminished. This phenomenon had been played several times through out the last one hundred years of Ethiopian history. The individuals who served Mengistu were now the initiators and molders of the crude and overambitious leaders of the EPRDF. The TGE appointed ministers, ambassadors and other lower level officials who used to be important officials during the government of Mengistu.

This form of relationships with former functionaries of a brutal dictatorial government is a clear example of a society that has not developed effective and solid civil society capable of influencing a government. The issue here is not to decry what should have been, but rather to find out what was missing that we failed to develop a strong civil society. This inquiry indicates the importance of the integration of the individual in the community in such a manner so that each draws on the power of the other. Fractal methodology is the best structural mechanism that could easily help us build such solid structure. Intermediary structures specially unions and professional associations are to be considered to be extremely important mediating structures between the individual and governmental structures.

V. Fractal Methods for Unions and Professional Associations (*mahibers or eders*)
If unions and associations had concentrated more on the enhancement and development of their work ethics and the relationship of members rather than focusing on how to make big-picture changes and prematurely challenging the political leaders and the government, they would have made lasting changes in the quality of life of their members and those of the community in general. The one single challenge to unions that brings them at loggerheads with the government deals with wages and benefits. Even such very important and justifiable goal could have been set aside in the interest of advancing the higher goals of the profession. "Work" should have been seen as a "religious" devotional experience, and everyone should have developed great sense of duty to do the best for the sake of future generations of Ethiopians. Such devotion does not require the government's approval or anyone else's either. There is much we can learn from the ways of the bee in its beehive, without becoming one.

Such bonding process of members primarily creates a strong group loyalty and solidarity. The members of unions and associations could have concentrated their energy and resources on how best their members would have discharged their duties to the public rather than aspire for political leadership. For example, teachers associations would have developed code of conduct for their teachers in how best to treat, teach, and guide students. Such intimate devotion to the work at hand would have served Ethiopians far better than the useless struggle for political power waged against government leaders for the last thirty years.

Governments around the world are simply a reflection of the norms and sentiments of their respective populations. It is a fallacy to try to make much of the distinction that is attempted by politicians and others about evil leaders and angelic underfoot constituency. There is no way that a brutal dictator could grow out of a population made up of individuals who are democratic minded and ethically respectful of individual rights, which statement affirms Montesquieu's brilliant admonishment of over two hundred fifty years ago. It is in this sense that I strongly argue that the primary focus of our struggle must be on small and intimate structures such as the individual, the family, the local community et cetera more than on the larger structure of power politics and governance. There is an element of inevitability of change if it is done from the ground up.

The current Ethiopian government is not much different than the brutal military regime of Mengistu. It even boasts among its leadership structure Mengistu's loyalists and officials. The central core is dominated by Meles Zenawi and his associates. These individuals, along with their sycophantic supporters from *litif* political groups, are some of the worst leaders Ethiopians ever had. They are greedy, selfish, violent in the extreme, and corrupt. They have no respect, compassion, understanding, or good will for the people of Ethiopia. In fact they have worked earnestly against the interest of all Ethiopians in their treasonous dealing with the leaders of "Eritrea" and the governments of the United States and Britain in the illegal independence of "Eritrea" and the signing of the Algiers Agreement that has effectively land-locked Ethiopia. That single act of treason by Meles and his government has resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians, and the forced lose of citizenship of millions of Ethiopian citizens. Ethiopia also lost its historic coastal territories of Afar and its twelve miles of territorial waters of the Red Sea with unimaginable lose of natural resources of great wealth. Thus, in working with the fractal system, we ought to ignore and shun those monsters [Meles Zenawi and members of his government, and associates] socially, and not cooperate in any form with their political or economic programs. This is not passive resistance but a prelude to a far reaching revolutionary change in the making.

VI. Fractal Leadership
In the vertical structure of Ethiopia's traditional leadership and hierarchy, the personality of our leaders is incubated, molded, and nourished to adulthood. And the events of the last one century may give us some clue as to why we have been subjected to progressively mediocre leadership for so long. In order for us to synthesis common characteristics of Ethiopian leaders, and thereby to develop theories of leadership we may have to consider the physical appearance as well as other individual attributes of our past leaders. Haile Selassie, Mengistu, and now Meles Zenawi and most of their circle of associates were/are diminutive men, usually not over five feet and a half. I am not being frivolous when I suggest that there might be a connection between the short stature of our leaders and their maniacal desire to control and subdue everybody within their reach. The phenomenon is well understood by psychologists for a long time. It is commonly known as the Napoleonic syndrome.

Of course, leaders are people too; they share in the culture and moray of communities. It is equally true also that the long established and independent societies of Ethiopia have as their organizing principles feudalistic or at best autocratic systems of relations. Even though, outwardly Ethiopian societies might look in a process of transformation from a traditional society to a hybrid of

modernity, it is still vastly a traditional society. The feudal hierarchical relationships are in evidence even within the command structures of liberation movements; it is cherished and strictly observed by leaders and members alike. It is with great disappointment and disgust that I witnessed first hand the despotic tendencies and the love of pomp and circumstance of the leaders of the EPRDF and other *tiletafi* political organizations soon after the formation of a transition government in 1991.

The first act of the military leaders when they took over the government of Haile Selassie in 1974 was to jump on the cars and personal properties of the officials of the government of Haile Selassie. And in time, they expropriated the personal properties of rich business men and progressively nationalized private property every where, and created a state of political orgy for the next Seventeen years. Similarly, the current government leaders behaved exactly in the same manner as the soldiers behaved toward the officials of Haile Selassie over seventeen years ago. Why do people from so different background act in similar brutal and despotic manner? Is there an Ethiopian national character of despotism and brutality? In order to answer these questions one must assume in the first place that nations and communities do develop characteristics the way individuals do. The risk in this type of analysis is the possibility of oversimplified stereotyping of a very complex process of social interactions and character building.

However, this is not the first time that nations were identified with particular characteristics e.g. *Nazi* Germany, *Fascist* Italy, *Godless* Soviet Union et cetera. So far as people are aware of the deficiencies of such characterizations, the limited use of such identification may be helpful for understanding why some leaders act in brutal and despotic manner while others are gentle and democratic. I am not offering here an excuse for the type of poor leadership for the last five successive generations in Ethiopia but a certain perspective not usually considered by political observers.

Now, that being the case in Ethiopia, what would be the main features of a fractal leadership? I have stated earlier and in Part One of this Article that large structures need contain the essential characteristics of the intimate and smaller structures of society i.e., the individual/family/community. The moral standard expected in the smaller and intimate structure is also an essential aspect of the larger structure of leadership and people associated with the leadership. Ideally, Ethiopians may chance upon the leaders of the country cleaning their streets, yards, and public parks in their free times as a matter of course. Do not dismiss this vignette outright as utopian and of no value. If society in its parts values compassion, generosity, hard-work, honesty et cetera, the leaders of that community have no other choice except to be themselves compassionate, generous, hard working, or honest. People should be willing to disobey and confront leaders or officials if those leaders or officials violate the norms of the small structures.

Conclusion/suggestions
Where is all this polemic leading us to? What steps can we take in the process of redrawing a new political program for Ethiopia based on fractal political philosophy? Is fractal philosophy another form of wishful thinking no better than utopian ideas? There are very many activities that we can effectively carry out without the approval of any government official. These activities are profound and very dependant on our resolve and commitment. Let us put our effort where it matters the most:

among ourselves. We all know how some Ethiopians who work as domestics for other Ethiopians are treated. We all know how the rigid "class" system works in Ethiopia. Let us start breaking down those negative social structures and treat every Ethiopian with respect and fairness. A number of Ethiopian families who have maids and servants invite their "gereds and ashkers" to sit and eat with them at their family table. It does not require government approval to do that.

There are numerous polarizing practices that we do without even thinking about them. For example, let us start by minimize the use of honorific titles and stop our groveling, which we pass as our sign of respect, to individuals whose claim for such difference is based on their physical size, wealth, or age. Let us internalize the fact that it is the duty of parents to defend, feed, cloth, and teach their children. It is not a privilege to be taken care of as a child. It is a right. Let us respect children and young people. And those of us who are educated ought to volunteer to tutor, teach, young Ethiopians in our spare times. Let us minimize the time we spent in bars, *azmari-bets,* and visiting houses of ill repute. Those of us, who are not married, ought to start families rather than spend our most useful years scouring for encounters in red districts. Let us honor all female Ethiopians and respect each others humanity. These are least troublesome items to do, and no government official would interfere in our behaving decently. Here is where the greatest revolution needs to take place—within the privacy of the inner sanctum of each of us.

In deep respect to the tradition of our great moral teachers, I will sum up the usefulness of fractal methodology by reciting a parable (a story) I learned in the Third Grade, a life time ago. The story is about a tiny mouse that saved a lion from a certain death. A lion was caught in a net-trap set by a hunter. The more the lion tried to break the net and escape, the more it was hopelessly entangled and incapacitated. Under such helpless condition the lion could be speared or stabbed to death. A lowly mouse hearing the roar and wailing of the lion came by to investigate what was going on and saw the great lion helplessly crying for help. The mouse [probably with some understanding of fractal philosophy!] using its tiny teeth snipped off each small connecting piece of rope of the net thereby created a hole large enough for the lion to escape. Thus the tiny and insignificant mouse saved the life of the king of the animal world. This story is an excellent metaphor to illustrate how fractal method would work to change large and seemingly formidable structures. The mouse by changing the smallest structure (tiny connector ropes) was able to change the nature of the large structure (the net) thereby making it possible for the lion to escape. Let us be like the seemingly weak mouse, and start changing small hurtful structures, so that we may be able to bring down the large tyrannical power-net structure that has been incapacitating and tying us down in bondage to poverty and in subjugation for years.

Tecola W. Hagos
April 2004, Washington DC

<u>COMING UP NEXT</u>
METAPHYSICS OF FRACTAL POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY
PART THREE:

FRACTAL INTERNATIONAL POLITICS: THE CASE FOR ETHIOPIA

Endnotes

1. Ron Eglash, African Fractals: Modern Computing and Indigenous Design (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1999.

2. See Tecola W. Hagos, Democratization? Ethiopia 1991-1994, Khepera Publishers, 1994.

3. Interview With Dawi Ibrahim the President of the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU), in Amharic, Ethiopian Register, July 1995, 59-66.

4. Interview With Gemoraw Kassa Secretary General of Teachers Association, in Amharic, Ethiopian Register, January 1996, 39-46.

5. The Preamble of the Charter set the tone of how organizations and institutions which were created during the seventeen years of the government of Mengistu to be treated. The Preamble stated that "to this end, all institutions of oppression installed by the previous regime shall be dismissed", and in Article 8 (2) of the Peaceful Demonstration and Public Political Meeting Procedure Proclamation No.3/1991 of August 12,1991 it was clearly stated as follows: "As long as the council of representative has not decided otherwise, no WPE or security member may participate in any political activity; the organizations being anti-democratic and criminal have been disbanded." Such pronouncement of the TGE at that time was proper in light of the circumstances that lead to the downfall of the repressive government of Mengistu.

6. This was not strictly followed. Depending on how the individual former Mengistu's official behaved towards the leaders of the EPRDF, and his abilities to serve under the new leaders made such individual acceptable to the leaders of the EPRDF. They were retained as officials and senior government advisors within the structure of the new government. This discriminatory retention of former high government officials in the new government (TGE) created a degree of skepticism and distrust that was never overcome by the EPRDF officials. One of the major problems of the current government is based on that initial distrust of its leaders.