

Research article

Endalkachew's Cabinet: Attempted reforms towards Constitutional Monarchy in Ethiopia (28 February-22 July, 1974)

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Abstract: *The objective of this article is to study Lej Endalkachew Mekonnen's (herein after Endalkachew) cabinet which lasted between February 28 and July 22, 1974. The formation of the Cabinet and its activities already obtained official status since Endalkachew assumed his office on February 29 of the same year. No proper study has been attempted to fill a research gap on this topic as far as our knowledge goes. The methodology relies on qualitative data. Our sources have been tapped mainly from archives, magazines, manuscripts in private hands, Ethiopian press and oral testimonies. The findings suggest that there were several interventions from different corners due to the complex historical situation challenging Ethiopia and its imperial order. It also becomes apparent that the short-lived cabinet prepared*

the way for military intervened in the then Ethiopian politics. Even more clear is how the Cabinet forged an alliance with the Military Coordinating Committee led by Colonel Alem Zewd TesemmaTäsämma from April 24 to July 22, 1974. Last but not least this article describes the way the created alliances functioned in that confusing moment as well as how the gradual power erosion prepared the way for the cabinet's demise.-

Key words: Ethiopia, Endalkachew, Cabinet, Military, Constitutional Monarchy, Commission of Inquiry

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1. Introduction

Endalkachew's cabinet was in power from February 28 to July 22, 1974. It emerged from the crumbling foundations of the Imperial system.¹ The Public demonstration of April 1974 organized by the Ethiopian Muslims, the taxi drivers, the factory workers and Armed Forces over the course of

¹ Bahru Zewde (1991). *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855-1974* (London: James Currey), pp.137-40,201-202.

three critical days—were clear signs of the regime's disintegration.² The drought in Wallo further exacerbated the crisis. The following poem captures the spirit of the time:

ሐምሌ ድንጋይ ይዞ፣ ናሴ ካራመዞ፣ መስከረም ብቅ ብሎ፣ሰው ሊገድሉላችሁ፤

አትገላግሉም ወይ ያላችሁ !! ያላችሁ !! ³

*July has gripped a stone,
August has taken the machete out of its sheath,
September has held a spear, going to kill the public/people,
Why do you not take the matter to arbitration /solution/ thou who possess [the wealth],
(thou who are around) [wax and gold are in].*

The “gold” sense of the poem points at those with resources needing to rescue the famished ones. The “wax” aspect of it appealed to those still alive to rescue the famine-ravaged citizens. Indeed, the diverse sources demonstrate that by the early 1970s, the social and political conditions in Ethiopia became reckless. This poem is an illustrative example to understand how the Emperor Haylä Sellasé I had fallen under pressure due to conditions that had gone beyond his control. The pensive photo of the Emperor that appeared in 1973 is from the collections from the Emperor’s Prize Trust for which Dr. Berhanou was the director in the 1970s.⁴

² The popular ‘Land to the Tiller’ (*Märét Lā Arashu*) well echoed by the Ethiopian students in 1965 but appeared as a decree by Feb. 1975. Ahmed Hassen Omer (2002). “Close yet Far: Northern Shawa under the Derg,” in Wendy James et al. *Remapping Ethiopia: Socialism and After* (Oxford: James Currey), pp. 74-89.

³ Source (ምንጭ)፡ - መክፍን ወልደሚካኤል (Mesfen Wolde Mariam) ፣ ገጠቱ ሊገድሉላችሁ (*Geteritu Etiopia*) *Rural Ethiopia*፣ ገ ፅ 9 (p.9), IES MS File No.1776.)

⁴ Communication with Dr. Berhanou Abebe.



Emperor Haylä Sellasé I⁵

The Imperial cabinet of Aklilu Habtä Wold (1961-1974), on its part, was forced to resign on February 27, 1974.⁶ The resignation appears to have been driven by widespread social unrest across various Ethiopian urban centers. The Ethiopian Teachers Association, the Ethiopian University and Ethiopian Secondary School students, taxi drivers, the Ethiopian Labor Union and the section of the Ethiopian Army stationed in Negelé Borana all played key roles in the growing wave of protests and civil discontent. The root cause of the social unrest reached a critical point when rural Ethiopia—particularly Wallo—teetered on the brink of a severe food shortage that led to widespread famine. The industrial and education sectors were also affected by similar hardships. At that point, reform or revolution appeared to be the only possible solutions, especially after the resignation of Aklilu and the dissolution of his cabinet. The previously mentioned segments of society played a crucial role as catalysts in the unfolding change. Between February and June 1974, conditions ripened, accelerating the momentum for transformation. Public demonstrations, in March

⁵ Courtesy of Dr. Berhanou Abbebe, Addis Ababa, January 1993

⁶ Bahru Zewde, pp.200, 2003; Colin Legum (1975). *Ethiopia: The Fall of Haile Selassie's Empire* (London: Africa contemporary Records Ltd.)

and April 1974, reflected growing discontent across various sectors of society. However, the change that occurred was not a true revolution. Instead, it was overtaken by a group of mid-level army officers, joined by the Ethiopian Police and the National Army (then known as the *Bihérawi Tor*), who openly intervened and ultimately hijacked the direction of Ethiopia's political transition in 1974.



Aklilu Habtä Wold⁷

Aklilu Habte Wold (fl.1912- 1974) was ultimately forced to resign, a decision he accepted despite opposition from Lieutenant General Abiye Abebe and *Leul Ras* Asrate Kassa. Both criticized him for stepping down without ensuring the maintenance of law and order, viewing his resignation as premature and destabilizing. Nevertheless, Aklilu remained firm in his decision, and recommended Lieutenant. General Abiye as his successor. However, Emperor Haile Selassie bypassed that suggestion and instead appointed Endalkachew Makonnen as the new Prime Minister. Rather than calming the widespread unrest, Aklilu's resignation only emboldened the protesters to escalate their demands. His immortal statement to the military challenge is still fresh in the living memory. Aklilu reiterated, "...if by killing us you could redeem Ethiopia from poverty, we then accept your action as a blessing one."⁸ Such were the last words of *Tse'hafi T'ezaz* ("Minister of Pen") Aklilu Habtä Wold, before his execution on November 24, 1974 with sixty imperial officials. His Excellence, Ketema Yifru, Aklilu's prison mate, recounted his final words to Dr. Berhanou

⁷ Courtesy of the late Dr. Berhanou Abbebe, Addis Ababa, January 1993.

⁸ Beyene Yigletu, aged 70, interviewed in Addis Ababa in 2007, then Police observing the massacre and involved in the operation.

Abbebe.⁹ He explained to him that on February 28, 1974, the Emperor appointed Endalkatchew, as a Prime Minister, and ordered him to form a new cabinet. In written sources and in the living oral memory, the cabinet formed by Endalkachew was/is known as *Addisu Cabinet*.



Photo: *Lej Endalkachew Mekonen*;¹⁰ Courtesy of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies

2. Endalakthew's Cabinet in the Literature of Ethiopian Revolution

It is essential to examine the literature on the Ethiopian Revolution within the context of Endalkatchew's cabinet—particularly its objectives, activities, challenges, and eventual downfall. To effectively manage the available primary and secondary sources, they may be grouped into three main categories: secondary literature; the memoirs and reminiscences of key political figures; and a combination of press reports, archival materials, and oral testimonies.

2.1. Secondary Literature

Much of the existing literature on the Ethiopian Revolution tends to dwell on generalities, often overlooking the broader and more nuanced aspects of the 1974 revolution. In particular, many scholars have neglected the significance and inner workings of the Endalkatchew cabinet. With few exceptions, most works have bypassed detailed analysis of this critical transitional period. Notably, Bahru Zewde (2002:231–232) gives special attention to the Endalkatchew cabinet. He highlights that its composition was particularly noteworthy, as it brought together a blend of well-educated individuals and experienced figures from the imperial bureaucracy—a combination that reflected both continuity and attempted reform within the collapsing imperial order. However, the composition and efforts of Endalkatchew's cabinet did little to impress the protesters who were already mobilizing a popular tide against the regime. Nonetheless, Bahru's treatment of the cabinet encourages further scholarly inquiry into this brief but

⁹ I am grateful to the late Dr. Berhanou Abbebe for access to his iconographic collections.

¹⁰ Courtesy of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies

pivotal period. Andargatchew (2004:41–43, 65–68, 85–86), for his part, presents the events of the time in a chronological manner. He focuses primarily on the cabinet’s initial address to the Ethiopian public, as well as its attempts to maintain peace and ensure the continuity of government functions. However, beyond these aspects, there is a noticeable lack of detailed information on the cabinet’s broader activities leading up to its dissolution.

Keller’s influential work (1988:175–176, 182–183) briefly outlines how Endalkatchew formed his government, introduced a reform agenda, and made initial efforts to contain the growing public radicalization. Of particular interest to Keller is Endalkatchew’s failure to assert control over the military—an institution that would ultimately arrest him. However, Keller does not explore how various segments of Ethiopian society actively resisted and challenged Endalkatchew’s cabinet. This omission leaves a gap in understanding the broader social dynamics that contributed to the cabinet’s collapse. David Halliday and Maxine Molyneux (1982) presented a comprehensive overview of the upheavals in Ethiopia during 1974. They characterized the Ethiopian Revolution as a genuine social revolution, arguing that it dismantled the political, economic, and social power of the monarchy. Meanwhile, Legum’s work (1975:36–46) focuses specifically on the rise and fall of the Endalkatchew cabinet over its brief four-month tenure. He expressed skepticism about labeling Endalkatchew as a true reformist, noting that he had been a key figure in the preceding cabinet under Aklilu. Compared to other analyses of Endalkatchew’s cabinet, Legum’s assessment is notably candid and grounded. Clapham (1988:38–40) provides an analysis of the Ethiopian Revolution with particular focus on Endalkatchew’s cabinet. He describes Endalkatchew as a liberal aristocrat who recognized the importance of a constitutional monarchy. However, Clapham argues that Endalkatchew ultimately became powerless in the face of mounting popular and military challenges. His work covers multiple facets of the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution, within which the Endalkatchew cabinet holds significant importance.

3. Reminiscences of Key Personalities, Press, Archives and Oral Sources

Five key personalities who formed the hard core of the military regime published their reminiscences after completing their prison terms. These include Fikre Sellasie (2006 E.C:43, 86), Fesseha (2000 EC: 64, 91-92), Berhanu (2013 EC: 164, 167,171-173), Haddis (2014 EC.: 139-141, 169) and Fasika (2015 EC.:78-80). Each of these figures addresses key issues related to Endalkatchew and his cabinet, though with varying depth and emphasis. Firsthand information is particularly rich in the reminiscences of Fikre Sellasie, Feseha, and Berhanu. Hadis’s account is also useful, while Fasika’s tends to remain more general and less detailed. The first four in this group, as key insiders of the period, provide especially relevant and valuable insights into the political dynamics of the time. The main press publications covering this period are the *Ethiopian Herald* and *Addis Zemen*. These sources are important

because they reported on the new cabinet both thematically and chronologically. Unfortunately, archives from the time are largely inaccessible, with only a few documents available at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies and some held privately. Our informants are mostly former cabinet ministers, providing firsthand accounts—information taken straight “from the horse’s mouth,” and often presented in full detail.

4. The New Cabinet

The formation of the Endalkachew Cabinet was completed between February 28 and March 22, 1974.¹¹ Known as the New Cabinet, it combined the young educated, the talented and experienced elderly figures.¹² Moreover, it was an agglomeration of people with different political outlooks. Accordingly, there were conservatives, “social democrats” and a few radicals. The following lines explain how Endalkachew illustrated the performance of his cabinet:

... በየትኛውም ዓለም ቢሆን በተለይም በአገራችን እና በታሪካችን እንደሚታወቀው አንድ አገር ሙሉ ውጤትን ለማስገኘት የሚያስችለው በአንድ ትውልድ ላይ የተመረተ የሥራ ውጤት ብቻ ሳይሆን፣ ከወጣቱ ትውልድ ዕውቀትና ጉልበትን፣ ከነባሩ ትውልድ ደግሞ...ልምድ የሚያውቁ ሰዎች በማስተባበር የተደራጀ ቡድን ሲገኝ ነው። ... በዚሁ ረገድ አሁን ያለው የካቢኔ አቋም ሲታይ ከሁሉም የተጠቀሰ ነው። ... በሰለጠኑት መስክ ያስፈልጋሉ የተባሉ ተመርጠው ተመድበዋል። ... በዕድሜ ትንሽ በሰል ብለው ለቡድኑ ሚዛን እንዲሆኑ ጭምር ተብለው የገቡ ሰዎች አሉ።¹³

As in other places, and particularly in our country and history, a country cannot secure achievement from the activities of one generation. Rather, it is whenever there is an organized group of persons knowledgeable with capacity: the young generation ... and the experiences of elderly are important. Regarding the present cabinet, it incorporates all these criteria...It included people assigned on the merit of their field of training... age long experience and refined knowledge...and even those aged enough making the composition of the cabinet as balanced as possible.

The New Cabinet had the following categories. The first contained those who had lived outside the country in diplomatic and other careers.¹⁴ Zawde Gabra Sellase, Michael Imiru, Bällätä

¹¹ *The Ethiopian Herald*, Saturday, March 16, 1974, pp.1-2.

¹² *Addis Zemen*, Saturday, *Meggabit* (March) 7, 1966 E.C., pp.3, 5, 7.

¹³ *Negarit Gazéta*, Year 33, No.12, *Miazia* 8, (April) 1966EC, pp.66-67.

¹⁴ *Addis Zemen*, Friday, *Meggabit* (March) 13, 1966 E.C., p.3.

Gabra Tsadiq, Kifle Wadajo, Bulcha Dammaqsa, Taddassa Tarrafa and Ahadu Saburé.¹⁵ According to Michael Imiru and Ballata Gabra Tsadiq, all of these individuals were eager to return and join the new cabinet, responding to the Prime Minister's call—and the broader national appeal—to "save the country" from the prevailing political crisis¹⁶.

Only two officials fell into the second category. These were Endalkachew and Minasé Haylé. They had held ministerial positions in Aklilu's former cabinet, and the Emperor wished to retain them in office once again. This indicates that the new cabinet had not fully severed its umbilical cord from the previous one. It serves as evidence that the break from the past was more symbolic than real. A contributor to *Addis Zemen* questioned why Endalkachew and Minasé Haylé—both known supporters of the old regime—had reappeared on the political scene. In the March 7, 1974 edition, the writer emphasized the possibility of a genuine break from the past. However, in a later reflection, the same contributor expressed disappointment, noting that the anticipated reforms in the country's administration had not materialized, and the promised departure from the old order remained unfulfilled.¹⁷ The third category contained key government officials who served in various ministries. Abiy Abäbä and Käbbädä Täsämma were examples.¹⁸ The fourth category was those whose posts never exceeded that of State Ministers. These included Assefa Ayyana, Mohammad Abdurahman, Belachew Asrat, Tekalign Gadamu, Million Naqniq, Tasfa Yohannes Barhé and Nagash Dästa.¹⁹ Nevertheless, although the New Cabinet combined criteria of education, youth, talent and experience this did not mean everything. Members in general represented different political and ideological interests.²⁰ Two appointees rejected their office while the third one resigned mid-way.²¹ Those who proved their

¹⁵ See Note No.6 *supra*.

¹⁶ Informants: *o* Bälläta Gäbrä Tasdek; Micahel Imru, interviewed February 11, 19 and March 2, 1993.

¹⁷ *Addis Zemen*, Saturday *Meggabit* (March) 7, 1966 E.C., p.3, 5; *Addis Zemen* Thursday *Genbot* (May) 1, 1966 E.C. P.1.

¹⁸ *Addis Zemen*, Saturday *Meggabit* (March) 7, 1966 E.C., p.5; see also Haile Sellassie Desta, pp.65-66.

¹⁹ *Addis Zemen*, Saturday *Meggabit* (March), pp.3, 5 7; *Addis Zemen*, Friday *Meggabit* (March) 13, 1966 E.C., p.1.

²⁰ Mariana and David Ottaways (1978). *Ethiopia: Empire in Revolution* (New York: African Publishing Company), p.31.

²¹ *Addis Zemen*, Thursday, *Meggabit* (March) 19, 1966 E.C., p.3; *Addis Zemen*, Thursday, *Genbot*, 1, 1966 E.C.p.1; Informants: *Ato* Bälläta Gäbrä Tasdek and Micahel Imru, interviewed February 11, 19 and March 2, 1993.

allegiance started to serve in Endalkachew's Government which promised a peaceful transition from autocratic rule to constitutional monarchy.

5. Attempted Reform of Endalkachew: (February 29 – June 14, 1974).

The main focus to be addressed in this article concerns the major activities of Endalkachew's cabinet. Following his appointment on February 28, Endalkachew formed his cabinet. The cabinet then set out to restore national peace and security²². In the meantime, events did not turn out as expected. The first reason had to do with the transitional forces, who seriously considered the New Cabinet as a close ally of the radical group. They feared the radical left would bring a fatal destruction to traditional order and usher in a new political force in the country. The radical left principally hatched in the rank of the Ethiopian Students in Western Europe and the United States influenced the local Ethiopian students at home. Secondly, that student movement was joined by other sympathizing pro-radical left leaning individuals including government employees and sons of the business communities educated both abroad and in Ethiopia. They raised their opposition and rallied for the immediate removal of the New Cabinet. The intention to replace it by a popular or revolutionary force became vocal. The New Cabinet faced situations of difficulty with the widespread demonstrations staged by teachers, workers and students. Further difficulties appeared due to the eruption of peasant protest in the vast southern part of the country²³. Despite such difficulties, the Cabinet continued to decide on some key national issues. It seems that this was by pinpointing major promises to the public and attempting minor reforms.²⁴

Hoping that future promises would address the prevailing problems, the Emperor, on March 4, announced to the public that the new cabinet had decided to undertake constitutional reform. This announcement further suggested that the reform would aim to ensure the protection of the country's human rights, along

²² Edmond Keller (1988). *Revolutionary Ethiopia: From Empire to People's Republic* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), p.176; Mariana and David Ottaways, p.3; *Addis Zemen*, Friday Yekkatit (February) 22, 1966 EC., p.6.

²³ Legum, pp.30, 39-40 ; Haile Sellassie Desta, p.41; Micahel Imru (1981). "The Coming of the Revolution: Towards an Understanding of Contemporary Ethiopia," A Lecture Delivered at ST Anthony's College, Oxford University, March 12, 1981, p.18;

²⁴ Ottaways, p.30.

with its wealth and cultural heritages.²⁵ On March 11, Endalikachew announced that his prime task was the improvement of the country's constitution. He further indicated that this would be prepared by experienced individuals and experts with different specialties. To complete the draft constitution, a duration of six months was officially fixed.²⁶ Nevertheless, this attempt did not materialize as the divided army continued to overshadow this hope. Besides, the civilian sectors voiced demands for a new government that would better govern the people on a democratic basis.²⁷

Early in April, the Council of Ministers continued discussions on the government policy. The conservatives skillfully worked to influence the cabinet and set it loose on the public protests. As they did not want to promote for further reforms, they tried to calm the prevailing turmoil. The following sentence well coined by the conservatives is clear from the reminiscences of *Lej* Michael Imru “ጥረታቸው በእነሱ አባባል ይህንን ዕብደት ለማብረድ ነው እንጂ በለውጡ ለመግፋት አይደለም”²⁸ (the efforts of the conservatives was to calm down the radical tones and not at all to advance the reforms). The radicals urged for the revolution and in between were the “social democrats”, whose motto was structural reform. Indeed, this tendency tilted to the general framework of Ethiopian political culture, the absence of different political parties²⁹.

On April 9, 1974, debates in different Newspapers raised the status of the country's socio-economic situation and the Policy Document published on April 9, 1974³⁰. Seen from the angle of the country's political situation such debates had been quite fair. It was a turning point in the history of the country for no cabinet, in the past, announced planned objectives to the public at large³¹. During the first phase of its preparation, those objectives addressed nothing more than

²⁵ Legum, p.39; *Addis Zemen* Wednesday, Yekkatit (February) 27, 1966 EC., pp.1, 6.

²⁶ Edmond Keller, p.176; *Addis Zemen*, Wednesday, Meggabit (March) 4, 1966 EC, pp.1, 7.

²⁷ Legum, p.43; *Addis Zemen*, Wednesday, Meggabit (March) 18, 1966 EC, p.1.

²⁸ Informant: Michael Imru.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Legum, p.39; Informant: Michael Imru, Addis Ababa, March 1993.

³¹ *Addis Zemen*, Friday, Genbot (May) 2, 1966 EC.; p.6; Informant: Michael Imru.

how to overcome the fiscal problem of the country, the prevailing drought and the attempt to run for constitutional monarchy. However, the supporters of the “social democrats” in the cabinet further succeeded in calling for additional considerations. They suggested programs that would narrow public income disparities.³² They further mediated the conflicting ideas between the conservatives and a few radical elements in the cabinet such as Jemal Abdulkadir, Mohammed Abdurahman, Tekalign Gedamu and Belachew Asrat. The bargain by the “social democrats” raised that the argument that wide based and long-term economic and social development should fall within the major priorities of this policy³³.

The basic concept of this plan was ensuring the country’s self-reliance. The solution must be the government’s role in increasing employment realizing that labor would play a significant role in the country’s development³⁴. It seems that the Policy Statement was the output of the long debate within the cabinet ever since its inception until its publication. External comments also reached the cabinet from one side or another. The opinion of some people was positive in a sense that the New Cabinet issued a promising policy in a country whose regime so far produced national longing for the idea of change. For others, however, nothing new appeared on the scene for the country had never lacked policies written in beautiful words. However, the problem would be how to put them into practice and they were afraid that such problems would repeat themselves.³⁵

One finds a critical opinion from the radical intelligentsia, who considered the policy merely reformist rather than revolutionary. By dispatching leaflets, they staged a political campaign³⁶. Besides, two commentators expressed their views. The first was an anonymous official member of the Confederation of the Ethiopian Labor Union (CELU), who commented on a specific part of the Policy Statement dealing with the question of land reform. His argument indicates that the

³² *Addis Zemen*, Tuesday, Miazia (April) 1, 1966 EC, p. p.6; Michel Imru, p.22; *The Ethiopian Herald*, Thursday, April9, 1974, p.4.

³³ Informant:

³⁴ *Addis Zemen*, Tuesday, Miazia (April) 1, 1966 EC, p. p.6; *The Ethiopian Herald*, Thursday, April9, 1974, p.5

³⁵ *Addis Zemen*, Thursday, Miazia (April) 3, 1966 EC, pp.1,6;

³⁶ Michael Imru, p.22.

idea of putting landlord-tenant relationship on a legal basis seems a mere continuation of the previous land tenure system. This indicates that the New Cabinet was not ready to handle the land question - for which people were carrying a popular slogan “Land to the Tiller”³⁷. The second one expressed his feeling idiomatically. His view toward the Policy Statement are well penned in *Addis Zemen* and reads as “የወፍጮ ቤት ዘፈን ለሠረግ አይሆንም” (songs for grinding at home is different from the one on the wedding ceremonies)³⁸. The statement denotes that while grinding at the traditional stone-mill women sings alone-with no one accompany them. Their songs are very different from wedding songs where so many people accompany in unison. -The analogy seems that Endalkachew’s Cabinet took every action of change without mass participation by taking into account the basic needs of the society. Hence, it would not bring the basic change.

Moreover, another two commentators raised additional interesting issues. The first was an anonymous writer, who focused on what ideology the country would follow. This was absent in the Policy Statement except the suggestion that a constitutional monarchy would be instituted and that independence, protection of cultural heritage and the realization of citizen’s full rights would be promoted. Another was a certain Zewdé Käbbädä, an expert in the Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. His concern was on the part of the Policy Statement raising the landlord-tenant impartial treatment. Zewdé Käbbädä did not however mention other issues such as the land tax, land rent and land litigation. It seems he attempted that the exploited tenants from rural Ethiopia were ready to join the resistance radical popular unrests in the cities. He further argued that there is an unclear phrase stating the law would protect the right of tenants. He suggested that the paradox was that if an individual had the right to cultivate, to what extent did the term ‘tenant’ holds real meaning.³⁹

Another activity of the New Cabinet was the formation of the Commission of Inquiry on March 25, 1974. The Emperor instructed the Prime Minister about it. It was established with seven

³⁷ *Addis Zemen*, Thursday, Miazia (April) 3, 1966 EC., p.6.

³⁸ *Ibid*, p.7.

³⁹ *Ibid*, p.6.

members on March 28 and started to engage in the task of inquiry by targeting leading members of the former cabinet.⁴⁰ The draft constitution that could serve as a general directive of the Commission, reached the Council of the Ministers on April 5.⁴¹ The New Cabinet put its full emphasis on the foundation of the well-organized Commission of Inquiry in the Policy Statement of April 8⁴².

Curiously, discontent within the army and civilian population was simmering despite Endalikachew's appeal of April 15 requesting the ዕድልና ፋታ meaning chance and patience for his cabinet.⁴³ The demonstrators put a strong pressure on the New Cabinet to put to trial the government officials illegally enriching themselves.⁴⁴ Their demand seems to have pressed the cabinet to approve the Commission of Inquiry on April 17. The Council of Ministers reviewed the draft and unanimously approved its submission to the Parliament for the final decision⁴⁵. The document reached the Parliament a week after later. Therefore, the foundation of the Commission of Inquiry was one of major activities of *the New Cabinet*. The Parliament, on its part, approved it on May 30. The Cabinet announced the creation of the Commission on June 14 being the last major activity as weeks after Endalkachew himself was under house arrest⁴⁶.

6. Public Response (February 30 – April 30, 1974)

This part deals with the public response against the cabinet. Some people considered that the *New Cabinet* could generate a means of transition from autocratic rule to constitutional monarchy. Nevertheless, its capacity remained fragile as its formation was in the period of turmoil. Above all, it was sandwiched between two opposite forces imposed their pressure on it. The first was the force of tradition that planned to use the New Cabinet in combatting

⁴⁰ *Addis Zemen*, Friday, Meggabit (March) 20, 1966 EC., p.1; *The Ethiopian Herald*, Friday, March 29, 1974, p.1.

⁴¹ *Addis Zemen*, Miazia (April) 20, 1966 EC., p.1.

⁴² *Addis Zemen*, Tuesday, Miazia (April) 1, 1966 EC., pp.1, 6-7.

⁴³ *Addis Zemen*, Wenseday, Miazia 9, 1966 EC., p.6.

⁴⁴ Legum, p.43.

⁴⁵ *The Ethiopian Herald*, Thursday, April 18, 1974, p.1.

⁴⁶ Legum, p.44; *Negarit Gazéta*, Year 33, No.14, Saturday Sené (June) 8, 1966 EC, pp.72-79.

widespread strikes campaigned by the radical forces. The Emperor, first vacillated between the two camps as his close associates convinced him to do away with the radical side and then with the armed forces⁴⁷. The second group was composed of radical revolutionaries and reformers who rallied to the New Government for recognition. Despite their active role in overthrowing the Aklilu Cabinet, their members were not in the New Cabinet. Indeed, the New Cabinet faced strong criticism and widespread strikes. For them, that very time was that of opportunity to fulfill their intention of transforming the Ethiopian society.⁴⁸.

The opposition forces on the other hand were many in number. They coined the age old Ethiopian adage now used as a “slogan” in openly voicing “ጉልቻ ቢቀያየር ወጥ አያጣፍጥም” “Replacing the fire stones won’t make the sauce taste any better”. In the view of these forces, the replacement of Aklilu’s Cabinet by that of Endalkachew’s would not bring change. Indeed, they argued it was the replacement of one cabinet by another one without transforming the existing system through structural change⁴⁹. They first targeted Endalkachew; among others the Ethiopian University Teachers dispatched a pamphlet on February 30. They insisted that *Lej* Endalkachew had family ties with the *Shoan* aristocratic family, as the Emperor’s handpicked him and he was present in the Aklilu Cabinet. They considered that he was not a good candidate to lead the cabinet. Similarly, the armed forces and the civilian population unanimously shouted that Endalkachew was one of the previous officials, who exploited the country’s wealth without accountability.⁵⁰

On March 1, students joined by many civilian populations staged a demonstration opposing against Endalkachew’s appointment. They rallied for the formation of a Popular Democratic Government⁵¹. Suffice to argue that the student protest was in harmony with broader political

⁴⁷ Micahel Imru, p.19;” Kā Ethiopia University Māmhran Yä Wätta Mäglächa’ (A Communiqué from Ethiopia University Teachers, dated. 26 Yekkatit () February) 1966 Ec. It is in IES MS No., 1776, pp.1-4.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, pp.1-2.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, pp.1.

⁵¹ Addis Hiwet (1975), *Ethiopia: From Autocracy to Revolution* (London: Review of African Political Economy), p.106.; John Merkakis and Nega Ayele (1978). *Class and Revolution in Ethiopia* (Nottingham: Spoksmen), p.91.

protests that raised the corruption of the cabinet and the absence of mass participation in forming the new one. The two popular slogans were the formation of a “People’s Government,” and “Land to the Tiller.”⁵²

On March 4, the Ethiopian University Teachers’ Association came up with a detailed critique that would serve an integrated political program for the disorganized mass movements. It incorporated the root cause of the February 1974 Revolution, the basic demands of the population and how to form the future government. Moreover, bringing to trial those who plundered public wealth and the formation of People’s Committee composed of all sections of the society came as two additional petitions. The whole intention seems that Endalkachew might not win popular support, as he was the emperor’s handpicked appointee.⁵³

The March 4, 1974 protest of the Ethiopian University Teachers’ Association coincided the Confederation of the Ethiopian Labor Union (CELU)’s petition against Endalkachew’s Government. CELU promised to organize a nationwide strike on March 7, if the sixteen demands requested could not secure a positive reaction. Among the sixteen points of CELU’s demands, were the introduction of a new labor legislation, freedom for their association, increasing wages to meet the skyrocketing market price, job security and others. CELU fought for the workers’ right of conscience. It demanded a legitimate access to free education. This was against the proposed Educational Sector Review in which the children of the poor would not have access to the school life. Nevertheless, Endalkachew’s Government was not ready to give a reaction. CELU organized a general strike from March 7 to 9, 1974 ⁶⁵. The consequence of that strike paralyzed the country’s economy in most major sectors. CELU forced the New Government’s officials to run from one factory to another to deal with the erupting labor demands. It was only after such effort that an agreement was reached between the government and CELU officials calming the strike for some time⁵⁴. The strike organized by the Ethiopian teachers all over the country added a fuel to the protests. A continuation of this also made its appearance in early

⁵² Ottaways, p..36.

⁵³ Cf. Foot Note 46 *Supra*.

⁵⁴ *Addis Zemen*, Tuesday, Meggabit(March) 3, 1966 EC, p.1; Ottaways, p.4.

March, after the formation of Endalkachew's Government. All basic demands raised the issues of salary increases, service scales and were against the Educational Sector Review⁵⁵.

The Ethiopian Teachers' Association announced a nationwide strike beginning on February 18, which continued until early March as their petitions remained unaddressed. Its position was, according to Ahadu Saburé, to remind the New Government to reconsider the vulnerable life of these citizens⁵⁶. Although the New Cabinet faced these demands, the measures it took were not promising except for minor improvements. Instance of these was the salary scale that the government announced on March 17. That minor reform did not satisfy the demonstrators representing different public sectors.⁵⁷ The taxi drivers due to oil price increases joined the February strikes. Throughout February, they were on strike against the Imperial Family which controlled the Ambessa Bus Company's access to cheap oil price. That fact kept them indifferent from the tide of opposition raging in the country.⁵⁸

On March 13, priests who hitherto feared to join the protest against the government now raised their voices. They obtained an opportunity and submitted a list of demands to the office of His Holiness *Abuna* Tewoflos the then Ethiopian Patriarch. Five hundred priests representing 200,000 of their colleagues all over the country did this. Although the objective of their protest was economic, according to Wolda Rufael Fetahi, then editor of the Church News, the problem already touched both personal and church rights. The genesis of the letter had its origin back in the year 1970/1971, when the previous cabinet appointed an Orthodox Patriarch and rejected the Church community's voice in the appointment process. Now once again, they demanded full participation in the future election of Church Patriarchs.⁵⁹ However, the New Cabinet ignored

⁵⁵ Ottaways, p.33.

⁵⁶ *Addis Zemen*, Wednesday, Meggabit(March)4, 1966 EC, pp.1, 3; *Addis Zemen*, Friday, Meggabit(March) 6, 1966 EC, p.1.

⁵⁷ *Addis Zemen*, Sunday, Meggabit(March) 8, 1966 EC, pp.1, 1; Ottaways, p.32; Informant: Ahadu Saburé.

⁵⁸ *Addis Hiwet*, p.105; *Addis Zemen*, Tuesday, Meggabit (March) 3, 1966 EC, p.7.

⁵⁹ *Addis Zemen*, Wednesday, Meggabit (March) 4, 1966 EC, pp. 1, 8; Getachew Tekalign (1966 EC.), "Balläfut Sost Werat Bä Ethiopia Yätayyāw Yä Politica Wezggeb (Political Disturbances in Ethiopia in the Course of Last Three months) " Tseday Year 2, No.7, Addis Ababa, Genbot (May) 1966 EC, pp.9-12; Edmond Keller, p.178..

their demands except uttering some promises on March 15, which in turn led to additional protest by the Church administration opposing the government's silence on the demands from the church.⁶⁰

From another corner, the Ethiopian Muslims organized a demonstration the day after their elders presented a petition of grievances to the Prime Minister on April 20. Their demands included the right to participate in administrative affairs as well as the protection of their civil rights. The Prime Minister told them the government would consider their demands⁶¹. Despite the Prime Minister's promise, they staged a one-day demonstration and pressed the New Cabinet to affirm a secular state, religious equality, and full participation of the Ethiopian Muslims in the process of nation building. They distributed leaflets, explaining these demands to the public at large. Joined by some Christian brothers and sisters, they proved a sense of citizenship an indication that Ethiopia is a country of all citizens irrespective of their religions.⁶²

Another challenge to Endalkachew's government came from within the Parliament, whose debates began to play a crucial role in the country's political landscape. They urged the New Cabinet to do something as the country's destiny was in its hands⁶³. That the Parliament was going to take part in the country's turbulent political events manifested itself at different times on different issues. It had carefully examined the New Cabinet's Policy Document of the April 8, 1974 to the extent the Prime Minister met with the Parliament for clarification⁶⁴. However, some basic national issues were the agenda of the Senate. For instance, Haddis Alemayehu, one of the Senate members, raised the formation of a Free Press by submitting the draft Proclamation. His attempt was to seek a solution for the complex problems the country faced. Even challenges from the Lower House of the Parliament became more serious. It raised the clear-cut boundary line - of the New Cabinet in the State affairs. It further boldly criticized the Ministers in the New Cabinet

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Addis Zemen*, Tuesday, Miazia (April) 11, 1966 EC, p.7.

⁶² "La Kristian Wondimochachin/ To Our Christian Brothers", dated Miazia (April) 9, 1966EC, IES, File No.1776.

⁶³ Informant: Micahel Imru ; Zewde Retta.

⁶⁴ Informant: Micahel Imru.

for not being capable. Lower House members from Eritrea distanced themselves from taking part in the meeting unless the question of Eritrea achieves genuine solution.⁶⁵ Such diverse challenges led public opinion to perceive the Parliament as rubber stamping and approving the position by the promoting the status quo.⁶⁶

The Nāgällé Mutiny of the army on January 12, 1974 served as a milestone in the history of the army. It decisively contributed to the role of the Armed Forces in the popular movement. However, divisions and internal problems re-enforced each other in the Army itself. No one knew the situation within the army⁶⁷. There was a signal that the army vacillated between the New Cabinet and the radical forces. There was clear evidence that the army first proved its allegiance for the New Cabinet. This became more evident when the Armed Forces came up with an official decree on March 27 to assure its stand.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the young educated, from the Air Force, strongly opposed to the New Cabinet and joined the radical left. The elderly and senior old staff identified themselves with the New Cabinet for various reasons. Nevertheless, one should note that the armed force had become one dynamic force to decide the fate of the political situation.⁶⁹

7. Military Alliance, Power Erosion and Endalkatchew's Resignation (April 24-July 22, 1974)

Realizing the hovering challenge, Endalkachew designed a new plan. The plan was to maintain law and order to save his government. Oppositions, from various sectors challenged the New Cabinet. It was in this political turmoil that Endalkachew approached the Armed Forces for an alliance. Accordingly, the Paratroops agreed to the intended alliance. This was secured through its Commander, Colonel Alām Zāwd Tāsāmma - Endalkachew's close relative⁷⁰. Accordingly, he created a committee composed of the Imperial Body Guard, Ground and Police Forces with

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *The Ethiopian Herald*, Wednesday, April 24, 1974, p.1; Getachew Tekalign, p.14.

⁶⁷ Getachew Tekalign, p.4; Legum, p.40; Informant *Bitwoddet* Zewde Gebre Hiwot.

⁶⁸ Legum, p.40; Informant: Micahel Imru; *Addis Zemen*, Wednesday, Megabit (March) 18, 1966 EC, p. p.1.

⁶⁹ Edmond Keller, p.176.

⁷⁰ Informants: Bälläta Gäbrä Tasdek and Micahel Imru; Legum, p.42; Edmond Keller, pp.181-183.

Alām Zāwd as its Chairman. The Vice Chairman was Junior Aircraftman Girma Fessaha. Major Atnafu Abatā and Captain Shiferaw Tilayé became Coordinator and Secretary, respectively⁷¹.

On April 24, Endalkachew authorized its function collaborating with the two Ministries of Defense and the Interior to restore peace and security. He warned the public that further strikes would be illegal.⁸⁹ This was after the Committee led by Colonel Alām Zāwd Tāsāmma submitted a petition to the Emperor himself to arrest the former ministers. This happened through a joint agreement between the New Cabinet and the Coordinating Committee to win over public discontent. This was clear from the speech delivered by Endalkachew at the Headquarters of the Fourth Division, on April 26. He indicated that the arrest of former officials was effected based on the demand from public at large. The Lower House of the parliament also raised the same issue in its meeting on April 22. The Lower House passed a decision regarding the arrest of former cabinet members to ensure the visibility the New Cabinet⁷². The report made by the Coordinating Committee, on April 27, epitomized the same intention. Colonel Alām Zāwd made the statement that the arrest of the former ministers was against those illegally enriched and who were inefficient to lead the country. His remarks regarding strikes was to addressed to the army, so that it should not tolerate strikes. The Prime Minister also announced similar warnings on April 24.⁷³

The Prime Minister's government carried out two important tasks: the task of controlling protests and of radical elements including those in the army. The Coordinating Committee tried to handle the matter though its efforts were not lasting. Endalkachew, having supporters in the army, for a moment, managed to curb civilian protests and divided the army. This intention was to minimize the voices of opponents. Nevertheless, protests in both the army and civilian corners ran higher. Despite Endalkachew's attempts, essential unity among the army, teachers, students

⁷¹ Ottaways, p.37.

⁷² *Addis Zemen Saturday*, Miazia (April) 19, 1966Ec, p.1.

⁷³ *Addis Zemen Sunday*, Miazia (April) 20, 1966Ec, p.1; *Addis Zemen Tuesday*, Miazia (April) 22, 1966Ec, pp.1, 6; *The Ethiopian Herald*, Wednesday, April 28, 1974, p.1; Ottaways, pp.37-38

and workers remained intact.⁷⁴ In response, the New Government made official announcements on April 29 to end public strikes and the formation of National Security Commission on April 30⁷⁵. That Commission had members the Armed Forces and the civilian population. Its Chairman was Abiy Abbaba, Endalkachew's Minister of Defense⁷⁶.

It seems that the National Security Commission was supposed to curb public strikes to restore law and order. It was the special “weapon of repression,”⁷⁷ with which the New Cabinet attempted to punish its opponents. The intention was that the fiasco of radical hope should loom large in the horizon. Endalkachew believed this was a stage of stability in contrast to the previous two months' challenges. It was also a moment of relief until its power was eroded military intervention. It.⁷⁸ In the meantime, though Endalkachew appealed for “ፋታ” – i.e., patience this did not lead him to a successful end. This became true as workers from National Bank of Ethiopia, Telecommunications, the Highway, the Ethiopian Electric Light and Power Authority and Ethiopian Coffee Board demonstrated in May and early June 1974. All of these workers posed the demand for the right to found trade unions. The warnings by Lieutenant General Abiy Abäbä to the Confederation of the Ethiopian Labor Unions underlined that such action could cost the closure of trade unions unless they could not stop inciting their workers⁷⁹. This in turn exposed Endalkachew's cabinet to serious criticism in different forms both in idiomatic forms and in clear statements. Opponents continued to express their view in idiomatic ways as in the case of the following poem:

... ማን አጠለቀልሽ?
ማንስ ሸለለመሽ ?

⁷⁴ Legum, p.40; Informant: *Lej* Micahel Imru.

⁷⁵ *Addis Zemen Sunday*, Miazia (April) 22, 1966Ec, p.8; Halliday and Molyneux, p.85; Markakis and Nega Ayele, p.100; Ottaways, p.38.

⁷⁶ Edmond Keller, p.182; Legum, p. 43; Markakis and Nega Ayele, p.100.

⁷⁷ Halliday and Molyneux, p.185; Legum, p.43; Markakis and Nega Ayele, pp, 100-101; Getachew Tekalign, p.4.

⁷⁸ Ottaways, pp.4-5; Getachew Tekalign, p.4.

⁷⁹ *Addis Hiwet*, p.108; Halliday and Molyneux, p.86; Legum, p.44; Markakis and Nega Ayele, pp.100-101; *Addis Zemen*, Wednesday, Miazia (April) 23, 1966EC, pp.1, 6-7.

እመቤትነቱን ለመባቻ ለታ፤
 ትንሽ የተስፋ ጉፍታ ...
 ተይ ይገለጥልኝ ያንቺ ጉድሽ ጉዱ፤
 ምስጢርሽ ምስጢሩ።
 ጥያቄ አበዛሁ?
 ወተወትኩ መሰለኝ፤
 ከአንድ ዛፍ ቢጤ፤ ከአንድ ግዑዝ ነገር ፤
 አንዳች መልስ ላይገኝ⁸⁰
...Who dressed you? Who did it with the ladyship?
On the first day of the month. Just a little bit of the vista of hope
...Oh, let me be clear about your wander and, your secret, the secret.
Have I posed many questions?
I think I have prattled a lot, from one sort of tree, from an ex-animate, unable
to have a response...

The surface and the hidden form of this poem consecutively indicate that people trust in trees, the latter (lifeless as it is) could not respond to their belief while the hidden meaning sets forth that Endalkachew's Cabinet could not respond to public demands. Despite such criticism, there was no attempted change in the following months. From early May, Endalkachew assisted by the National Security Commission crushed public strikes. He insisted to resist public demands⁸¹. Nevertheless, he failed to realize that he could not easily handle such explosive demand in both the rank of the civilian and the Armed Forces

A fatal mistake was made by the Emperor himself when broadcasting, on the Patriotic Victory Day on May 5, addressing those radical groups and insisting they should stop agitating against the system. This, however, signaled that everyone should stand in unity against the demonstrators. He did not properly realize that the political ground to undertake such a speech was too narrow. The speech instigated the public against the feudal order. Besides, on May 9, the Prime Minister addressed the Parliament requiring that the latter should co-operate with the New Government to overcome the prevailing chaos. He further addressed declared that all what his

⁸⁰ Fekade Azeze (1966 EC), "Warka Mariam" in *Tsedey*, Year2, No.7 (Addis Ababa: Genbot, 1966 EC), p.28.

⁸¹ Legum, p.44; Halliday and Molyneux, p.85; Informant: Bälläta Gäbrä Tasdek.

cabinet engaged in demonstrated the direction of change quite different from that of Aklilu.⁸² Despite Endalkachew's efforts, however, everything went beyond his capacity to contain the situation. The armed forces realized that the absence of law and order in the rural areas and the mobs in the urban centers could dismember the country and started to make themselves ready for action.⁸³

Members of the pro- radical side in the Coordinating Committee manifested intervened in the New Cabinet's administrative activities.⁸⁴ For instance, they wanted to dictate the New Cabinet whom the latter would arrest among the former officials and the way the new constitution will be implemented. These kind of problems happened due to the shortcomings of the cabinet itself for it did not come up with significant reforms in a rapid pace. Hence, the New Government failed to bring the desired change⁸⁵. Even opponents from the left side, largely attribute the weakness of the New Government due to the Prime Minister secretly leaning to his class origins to undermine the public protests in favor of change⁸⁶. According to Dawit Wolda Giorgis: *Endalkachew was an ambitious aristocrat whose approach to politics and concept of change heavily influenced by his class background and his alliance to the Emperor. He completely underestimated the forces behind the persistent demands of soldiers and intellectuals ... When Endalkachew attempted to clamp down on the continuing civilian protests, the military decided to step in.*⁸⁷

⁸² *Addis Zemen Friday*, Genbot (May) 2, 1966EC, p.6; Informant: Kifle Wodajo.

⁸³ Michael Imru, p.22; Informant: Bälläta Gäbrä Tasdek.; Informant: *Balambaras Bäqqälä Ahmed*.

⁸⁴ Halliday and Molyneux, p.86; Legum, p.44; *Negarit Gazéta*, year 33, No.14, Sen (June) 8, 1966 EC., pp.72-77.

⁸⁵ Informants: Bälläta Gäbrä Tasdek; Micahel Imru.

⁸⁶ *Democraciya*, Ethiopian People Revolutionary Party's (EPRP'S) confidential, No.3, Hamel (July) 25, 1966, EC, P.2; *Yä Säffiw Hizb Dimts* (Voice of Broad Mass), All Ethiopian People Socialist Movement (AEPSM) *alias MEISON*, No.4, Pagume 5, 1966EC (August 25, 1974), p. 1.

⁸⁷ Dawit Wolde Giyorgis (1989), *Red Tears: War, Famine and Revolution in Ethiopia* (New Jerst: The Red Sea Press), p.11.

Nevertheless, the military – at the beginning – did not directly challenge the New Cabinet. However, there was an important break-through when some of its radical members headed by Major Atnafu Abate appeared on the scene and formed their own Committee coined as *Därg* on June 28. This was by breaking away from the one chaired by Colonel Alam Zäwd. Lastly, Major Atnafu and his splinter group was paralyzed the Colonel and the committee he chaired.⁸⁸ Such a move from the Army side facilitated the demise of Endalkachew's Cabinet.⁸⁹ The *Därg* practically took effective political power and hijacked the Ethiopian revolution of February 1974. The *Därg* at the beginning was a mere agglomeration of the army representatives who did not have skillful knowledge of politics in general and the Ethiopian political realities in particular. It started to learn how to walk on the political road via the input by the foreign educated Ethiopians who returned home to participate in the Ethiopian Revolution⁹⁰.

Since June 28, the *Därg* was a political body parallel to the New Cabinet and controlled its activities. The *Därg* fearing that the new Cabinet could abort its intentions, started arresting prominent Government officials. On July 1, it arrested twelve members of the ruling class including Asrate Kasa, Iskendir Desta, Zawdé Asfaw and Yilma Deressa.⁹¹ On July 2, the *Därg* demanded the Emperor to release political prisoners, an amnesty for the political refugees and the implementation of the improved constitution. The Emperor approved these measures on July 3⁹². In the meantime, the *Därg* formed a Commission of Inquiry on July 10,⁹³ and elected its Chairman and Vic-Chairman on July 18.⁹⁴ With the slogan *Ethiopia Tikdem* (Ethiopia First), the *Därg* embarked on arresting former officials one after another. The *Därg* did not mention that it

⁸⁸ *Ibid*; Edmond Keller, pp.182-183; similar information is available in “Sela Addisu Cabinet (About the New Cabinet) Carton71, Folder 6, MIA (Ministry of Interior Archives, Addis Ababa. . .

⁸⁹ Addis Hiwet, p.108; Informant : Micahel Imru; Informant : Ahadu Saburé

⁹⁰ Dawit Wolde Giyorgis, p.12; Donald Crummey (1981), “The Ethiopian Revolution” *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, XV, 2 p.343; “Negusu Yiwuredu beaddis Mengist Yiteku”(Let the Emperor quit, we need a new Government), No carton, Folder 181, dated Genbot 11966/ (May9, 1974) IES (Wolde Meskel Tariku Archives),

⁹¹ Legum, p.44; *Addis Zemen*, Tuesday, Sene (June) 25, 1966 EC., p.1; Informant: Zwede retta.

⁹² *Addis Zemen*, Tuesday, Sene (June) 27, 1966 EC., p.7; Informant: Bitwodded Zewde Gebre Hiwot.

⁹³ *Addis Zemen*, Friday, Hamle (July) 4, 1966 EC., p.1; Informant: Dr. Dejjazamtch Zewde Gebre Sellassie.

⁹⁴ *Addis Zemen*, Tuesday, Sene (June) 12, 1966 EC., p.1; Informant: Téwodros Tsigémarqos Gebre Tekle..

would assume political power. All this happened with the presence of Endalkachew whose power status became that of a mere dummy to execute political decisions.⁹⁵ Finally, the *Därg* started arresting some members of the New Cabinet. It arrested Abiy Abäbä on July 9⁹⁶. The final target was Endalkachew by condemning his leaning in favor of his relatives, and his attempt to disunite the Armed Forces; after a few days house arrest he was forced to resign on July⁹⁷. Michael Imiru replaced him as the new Prime Minister, though a close relative of the Emperor, Michael Imiru was son of the renowned patriot *Ras* Imru, noted for his criticism against the imperial policy.⁹⁸ The sun was setting over the regime. An anonymous member of the royal family realizing the regime's negligence in overlooking the hovering popular tide and the military intervention composed the following couplet which reflects the regret of the old regime:

ሰምተን ነበር እኮ ነገሩን በዝና፣

ማጆር ሳይታጠቅ ካፒቱን ሳይጠና!!⁹⁹

We actually heard of the news by hear say,
Even before the Army Majors] were armed and the Captains got strength [to join hands].

⁹⁵ Legum, pp.44-46; Christopher Clapham (1988), *Transformation and Continuity in Revolutionary Ethiopia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.40; “Bihedu Aygermenem” (“We do not care about His departure”), A Polemic written by Mulugeta Lule, then Ethiopian Journalist based in Addis Ababa. Carton 9 Folder 11).

⁹⁶ *Addis Zemen*, Wenesday, Hamle (July) 10, 1966 EC., p.11; see also “Endalkachew Min Iyalu new?”(What does Endalkatechew say?), Carton 72, Folder7, MIA (Ministry of Interior Archives, Addis Ababa.)

⁹⁷ Clapham, p.40; Dawit Wolde Giyorgis, p.13; *Yä Säffiw Hizb Dimts* (Voice of Broad Mass)...p, p.1; *Democraciya*, No2, Hamle (July) 18,1966EC.’ P.3.

⁹⁸ *Addis Zemen*, Wednesday, Hamle (July) 16,1966EC,p.1; Dawit Wolde Giyorgis,p.13; Legum, p46; Clapham,p.40;Clapham,p.40; E.Rosenfeld and Chris Prouty (1981), *Historical Dictionary of Ethiopia* (London: The Scarecrow Press),p.59.

⁹⁹ Informants: Bälläta Gäbrä Tasdek; Micahel Imru. I am grateful to Dr. Abiy Daniel of College of Humanities language Studies, Journalism and Communications, Department of English for translation.

8. Conclusions

The sociopolitical developments that gave rise to revolutionary conditions in early 1970s Ethiopia were largely the result of the imperial regime's self-preserving stance and its failure to implement meaningful measures for the country's development. The Emperor and his monarchical institutions failed to address the growing public grievances and the looming social crisis on the Ethiopian horizon. These unresolved issues ultimately contributed to the outbreak of the revolution. In an attempt to navigate these mounting challenges and preserve the regime, the imperial order formed a new cabinet, proposing a transition toward a constitutional monarchy as a potential solution. The imperial mandate was entrusted to Endalkatchew Mekonnen. The findings of this micro-historical study identify the underlying factors that facilitated the outbreak of the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution, as well as the attempted reform toward a constitutional monarchy by Endalkatchew's cabinet. Finally, Endalkatchew's cabinet was crippled by military intervention and found its fatal demise.

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