

The Effects of State Terrorism, Globalization, Capital Accumulation, and Agency in Oromia and Ethiopia

Asafa Jalata
The University of Tennessee

Starting in 1991 and continuing into the 21st century, the minority Tigrayan-led Ethiopian government has been imposing state terrorism and political repression, with the assistance of big powers and international institutions, on the Oromo, the largest ethnonational group, and other groups in order to dominate the political economy of Oromia and Ethiopia and to transfer economic resources, particularly land, to Tigrayan state elites and their domestic and international supporters. This paper will first provide the historical and sociological background of this process. Second, it will outline theoretical and methodological approaches of the paper. Third, it will critically explore how the Ethiopian state and its international supporters are using the discourses of democracy, human rights, and economic development while terrorizing the Oromo and other indigenous peoples by denying their democratic and human rights and by dispossessing them of their ancestral lands and natural resources. Fourth, the paper will identify and explain the political and economic policies of the regime, their consequences and why Western powers as well as China have supported these policies. Fifth, it will explain how the ongoing peaceful Oromo mass protest movement has emerged in Oromia, why the regime is violently cracking down on protestors, including Oromo farmers, university students and school children, and why the West is facing a political dilemma regarding supporting a government that is openly massacring protestors and violently repressing dissent. Finally, the piece will explore the larger political and economic consequences of the Oromo protest movement in bringing about a fundamental transformation to the political economy of Oromia and Ethiopia.