

The Early Development of Ethiopian Television (1964-1991): From 'Magical Window' to Socialist Propaganda

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Abstract: This paper covers a specific period of Ethiopian media development from 1964 to 1991 recognizing that media are among the most powerful forces in shaping Ethiopian society. The topic focuses on two parts: The birth of Ethiopian Television in the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie and its development through the era of the Derg regime from 1974 to 1991. As part of Ethiopian media history, it investigates the full range of television's development in terms of its technological and human resource advancement. As a humanistic endeavor, the ETV history considers unique events, technologies, personalities, and developments—the contingencies that the station faced during the 26 years of its existence. Descriptive research design is used as a research methodology that focuses on describing the event in a systematic and accurate manner. It aims to answer questions about how ETV developed as an institution, how technology and professional practice in the newsroom changed, and what challenges and progress were observed during these two periods. The research data collection began with the analysis of historical documents, and interviews were conducted with people who had worked at the station starting from its inception. In particular, the organization's documents obtained from the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation became the basic resource for this study. The article tried to analyze and present the transformation of the Ethiopian television station through time.

Key words: Ethiopian television; Ethiopian media; ETV during the reign of Haile Selassie, ETV during the *Derg*; Magical window; Socialist propaganda

Introduction

Background

The method of cultural media history study emphasizes the collective process of people connected with communication within specific economic, political and cultural environments. From this perspective, a consideration of media would address the development of specific technologies as well as view them as social practices and cultural forms. Media history focuses primarily on the specific technological inventions. It privileges the tools, making the technologies seem more important than those who use them. Understanding how people accept or reject new technologies, along with considering the reasons for their incorporation and how people use those technologies, reinforces human agency in the communication process (Williams, 1977).

This paper covers two different periods through the prism of cultural media history analyzing method presented under the title "The Early Development of Ethiopian Television." The first part covers the station's founding period from 1964 to 1974. This period was the era of Emperor Haile Selassie's feudal government, and it is believed that the Ethiopian audience showed great enthusiasm for watching this

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government owned broadcasting service for the first time. It is known that the programs broadcasted by the Ethiopian television service caused excessive happiness and inner feelings among the people and the nobles at that time because the audiences considered the TV as the "miracle window" (Solomon, 2005).

The second period covers from 1974–1991 during the Military *Derg* era, or Revolution era. At this time, Ethiopian television has reached a different level in terms of manpower, structure, distribution scope, and color usage, so this article examines and presents the change and development of the station. Especially in terms of policy and content, it looked at the fundamental differences compared to the Emperor's era. Furthermore, it analyzed how socialist ideology has also become a tool of media propaganda.

For the first time, the emperor appeared on the television window (the 'miracle window'-as viewers then called it) for the celebration of his 33rd coronation day, and in his speech to the people on October 30, 1964, he announced that television was a powerful platform in the effort to spread education and news in Ethiopia and announced the official start of the work. Ethiopia also got the second broadcasting service after Radio Ethiopia. During the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie, Ethiopian media transformed from print to broadcast media (Mekuria, 2005).

It is impossible to say that there has been a lot of documentary work done on the issues related to the historical establishment and development of Ethiopian media. Especially in the television sector, it is not possible to get such detailed information. Most of the available information was summarized and written for a particular occasion, and it was not organized in a way that was conducive to study. Some of the published articles also have data errors. I believe that this article will be an additional resource for those who are looking for information and doing research on television in the future.

Methodology

The study of cultural media history can not only enlighten the mind, but it can also prove instrumental in preventing the repetition of past mistakes. Without history, there can be no future.

Cultural media history emphasizes the collective process of people connected with communication within specific economic, political and cultural environments. From this perspective, a consideration of media would address the development of specific technologies as well as view them as social practices and cultural forms. When media history focuses primarily on the specific technological inventions, it privileges the tools, making the technologies seem more important than those who use them (Brennen, 2017).

To demonstrate the early development stage of the Ethiopian television through institutional media history approach, the qualitative research done with the analysis of historical documents, and interviews were conducted with people who worked at the station at its inception. In particular, the organization's documents obtained from the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) became the basic resource for this study. The study follows the path of a descriptive survey that emphasizes the period.

Research Questions

This paper tries to answer the following three research questions:

1. How did ETV develop as an institution from 1964-1991?
2. How have technology and professional practice in the newsroom changed?
3. What challenges and progress were observed during these two periods?

Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of this study is that the national documents related to television are not well organized and found for assessment. Another thing is that the willingness of people who were employees of the organization and wanted to talk about the situation in detail was minimal, and had its own impact on the study.

Establishment and Development of Ethiopian Television (1964-1974)

Television is a form of mass communication tool that is spreading around the world. If there was no television, most of the common people would have a hard time meeting and even getting to know the political lines of its leaders. It was also difficult to know the civilization that the world has reached (such as landing on the moon, etc.), developments, wars, catastrophic events, science and technology, or various cultural developments. As a result, television has made a significant contribution to a society's development and knowledge processes. It also has a cultural impact. As a source of information and entertainment, "'Toolshade Home Style' has become an influential communication tool of its time (Fang, 1997). It is also part of the discovery of the age of the fifth communication revolution. The following small example will suffice to describe the influence of television. The study asked children between 4 and 6 years old, "Who do you love more than television and your dad?" 54 percent of them answered the question, "Television!" (Mingo, as cited in Vivan, 1983).

For the first time, television was broadcasted directly to the public in England in 1936 and America in 1939. According to Nwulu et al. (2010) in Africa television was introduced in Nigeria in 1959 and belonged to the Western Nigeria Television Service (WNTS). This means that television entered Ethiopia after 28 years of delay from Europe and after five years from Africa.

The history of the Ethiopian television records that the Ethiopian television was established on November 03, 1964, after going through five different processes to present the program to its viewers (Leykun, 1994).

The first attempt was in 1956, when Emperor Haile Selassie was celebrating his silver jubilee at the Ethiopian Telecommunications Exhibition Center (Pavilion) at the old airport. The exhibition was organized by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and it is mentioned that this was the time when the closed-circuit method was used only in the exhibition that was able to transmit the event. It can be said that this period was the foundation for the establishment of the first Ethiopian television.

The second period dates from the years 1960–1961. At that time, the efforts of a gentleman named Dejazmach Daniel Abebe to establish a private television station could not be ignored. At that time, Daniel submitted a proposal to the House of

Ministers that would enable him to establish a private television station. Daniel's proposal was rejected after the council discussed it. The answer given to Daniel was that it was not possible to establish a television station at an individual level. The third attempt was made in 1963 when the office of the Organization of African Unity was established in Addis Ababa. At the time, a special close circuit broadcast ceremony was held at the Africa Hall. There was no doubt that this period was a great starting point for the newly independent African states (Bourgeult, as quoted in Birhanu, 2009).

After the desire to establish at the individual level failed, there was an effort to establish a station at the corporate level. That was the time when the Ethiopian Telecommunication Company showed interest in establishing a commercial television station. However, the organization could not achieve its goal. This was due to two reasons: one was lack of permission from the government and the second reason was the questionable profitability of the site if it was established.

The fifth attempt was the desire to establish a television station was initiated in 1963 after the establishment of the Radio Voice of the Gospel, run by the Lutheran World Federation. The station submitted its proposal for establishment to the House of Ministers, but the House rejected the request. The request of this religious organization was rejected like other previous requests.

Finally, the government discussed with various international television companies for two consecutive times with the intention of establishing a television station in Addis Ababa. Among them, the ones mentioned were Thomson Television International Limited and Philips Ethiopia (Leykun, 1994). Both organizations expressed their interest in working with the government to jointly establish the television station. Accordingly, Philips Ethiopia requested 232,094 Ethiopian birr to establish a 75 watt transmitter with antenna and studio equipment that can be installed all over Addis Ababa. However, the article published by the Ministry of Information in 1964 states that it cost was 6,000,000 birr (MoI, 1973). In addition, the company (Philips) has shown its willingness to train six technical staff in the Netherlands who will carry out the work of the station in the future.

The Thomson Company also studied and proposed that in order to air the program for one and a half hours a day, six days a week, it would require a budget of 247,000 birr per year for staff salaries, operations, film rental, and program expenses. Although there was a desire to start the work of the station on August 23, 1964, Yohanes Kidanemariam, the Minister of Pen, notified the company on August 7, 1964, by stating that their request had been approved by the Emperor, and then announced that the formal approval had been finalized by the Deputy Prime Minister Haregot Abay. Accordingly, an agreement was reached with Thomson Television (International) Limited on the part of the government, and the work of establishing the station was accelerated. The television station was organized into 21 different rooms on the fourth floor of the newly built municipal building and started broadcasting for the first time in 1964. And for the first time, "TV is here to stay!" was declared (Leykun, 1994).

The Internal Organization and Manpower During the Establishment

The Ethiopian Television document explains that the Ethiopian Television, which started its operations in the municipal building, was organized into seven different

departments. They were the studio, control room, transmitter room, maintenance, editing, preparation (processing) room, and admin offices.

Studio, Control Unit and Maintenance Section

Only one studio was set up at the time, and it was quite small. In that small studio, there were cameras, studio backgrounds, monitors, microphones, studio lights, chairs, and tables. It looked like a small office with no proper dimensions by studio standards. The studio lights were also not organized to the extent required for a television studio. It was inconvenient to work in the studio for the newsreaders, camera operators, program directors, producers, continuity announcers, and stage managers in that narrow, suffocating atmosphere (Leykun, 1994).

Like the studio, the control room was also narrow, and the gramophone, telerecorder, ODU mixer, transmission control, video monitors, etc. were organized in a compact space for the control work. All departmental staff (Transmission Controller, Audio and Video Operators, Program Director, Shift Controller, Daily Newsreader, etc.) were performing their daily duties in a congested manner. In the transmitter section, outside the control room, there were times when the workers were exposed to electric shock due to the improper installation of electrical lines. According to Engineer Gesese Abai (Getu Temesgen, 2008, personal communication,), it was not possible to increase the technical and distribution capacity for 11 years in a row. Mr. Herman Rudd, an engineer from Sweden, recalled that he did a site survey by helicopter in 1963. The transmission power was installed on Mount Boku at Adama, in Entoto (in 1970), and in Debrezeit(now Bishoftu) in 1972, with its capacity expanded to about 0.75 kilowatts.

As with other sections, the maintenance department did not have enough space to carry out technical work. In this section, various types of studio equipment were handled by foreign and local professionals. In reality, the department cannot be said to be providing full professional services. In addition, as the department was not equipped with various inspection equipment, it didn't provide satisfactory professional services.

Editorial and Processing Department

In the editing department, two editing machines were installed, and the editing work of negative black and white films was done every day, so the workers fulfilled their professional duties under very difficult conditions. In the processing department, a film processing machine was installed as part of the processing of black and white negative films. It was not a healthy and suitable room, as the chemicals were stored in this same room. In conclusion, it is important to remember that during the inception of the Ethiopian television, professional and non-professional new and old equipment were used.

The only professional Philips microphones, transmitters, and 16mm field cameras that were used directly for the job were bought from West Germany. The other pieces of equipment were always sent to the repair room, and the work was interrupted, as a document obtained from Ethiopian television confirms.

Manpower in 1964

As soon as the television station was established, 31 people were employed to start up the program. Of these, five were Britons (16.5 percent) and 26 were Ethiopians (83.85 percent) who were gathered from various governmental and non-governmental organizations. According to the number of workers at that time, four were camera workers, and the rest were involved as program producer, newsreader, program director, secretary, driver, messenger, and cleaner (Jibril Abawari and Leykun Berhanu, 2008 E.C, personal communication).

Presentation of Programs (Informative, Educational and Entertaining)

The station, like any modern media institution, operated on informative, educational, and entertaining principles. Since its establishment in 1964, the Ethiopian Television has been broadcasting informative programs and daily news in Amharic and English. Especially in the daily news around the world this week, sports news, special programs, and parliamentary programs were broadcasted in Amharic. The English-language program featured daily news and special programs. It also used to broadcast educational and entertainment programs in Amharic and English. In terms of size, foreign programs covered 80 percent, while national programs have a share of only 20 percent. In the first season, no program was broadcast on Sundays. Later, it started airing on Sunday. But on Saturday, the program was from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. It was broadcasted from 5 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. from Monday to Friday and from 8:30 p.m. to: 2 p.m. on Saturday. Later, starting in January 1964, the programs were aired from 8:00 p.m. to 10:15 p.m.. Mostly film programs dominated the air time. Verley Hill, The Friends, Robin Hood, and The Flying Doctor were popular films of the time.

Table 1: TV show dayparting

Date	Time	Program
Sunday	8:00 pm	News in Amharic
	8:15 pm	A movie called Valley Hill Billies
	8:45 pm	Wonder of the world film
	9:15 pm	The Defenders (film)
	10:05 pm	News in English
	10:20 pm	End of the program
Monday	8:00 pm	News in Amharic
	8:15 pm	Robin Hood (film)
	8:45 pm	Sport news
	9:05 pm	Tomorrow's teachers
	9:35 pm	Films produced by Elfrid Hitchcock
	10:00 pm	News in English
Tuesday	10:15 pm	End of the program
	8:00 pm	News in Amharic
	8:15 pm	Students' debate
	8:45 pm	Film-Doctor Kilda
	9:30 pm	Let's research program
	10:00 pm	News in English
Wednesday	4:45 pm	End of the program
	8:00 pm	News in Amharic
	2:15 pm	Film
	2:45 pm	Music

	3:15 pm	Bonanza (film)
	4:05 pm	News in English
	4:20 pm	End of the program
Thursday	8:00 pm	News in Amharic
	8:15 pm	Women and their profession
	8:45 pm	Espionage (film)
	9:30 pm	Film- Flying Doctor
	10:00 pm	News in English
	10:15 pm	End of the program
Friday	8:00 pm	News in Amharic
	8:15 pm	Let us introduce you
	8:45 pm	Music show
	9:15 pm	Film- Rawhide
	10:00 pm	News in English
	10:15 pm	End of the program
Saturday	5:00 pm	Children's Time - a movie called Huckleberry
	5:30 pm	Music and mystic show
	6:00 pm	End of the program
	8:00pm	News in Amharic
	8:15 pm	sport news
	9:30 pm	Saturday Night Cinema- "The Movie"
	10:00 pm	News in English
	10:15 pm	End of the program

Source: Ethiopian Radio and Television Program Magazine (1964)

The Ethiopian Television Service increased its program outputs after the producers received hands-on short-term training and experience exchanges. It was very difficult to find full-fledged, qualified professionals to produce the programs of the Ethiopian Television Service. There was no expert in television presentation at the time. It is important to mention that the first video tape recorder was used in 1967, two years after the establishment of the Ethiopian Television Service. In the Western world, however, video tapes started to be used 16 years before (in 1951) they were used in the Ethiopian television.

At that time, about 80 percent of the air coverage consisted of selected films from foreign countries, such as England and USA. The selection of films were made and presented by Television International Enterprise, a representative company of the Ethiopian Television Services located in London. Later, however, attempts were made to nationalize the program by having entertaining dramas produced in the country. In this regard, the Ethiopian Television coordinated with the Addis Ababa Art Center to prepare and perform various dramas, traditional and modern dances, and songs in coordination with the military and police units. Military bands were also additional program resources. Because there was no technical capability to record videos, artists were forced to perform their performances live. As a result, it was impossible to even correct their mistakes. In order to attract a large audience, the government set up about 50 displays and booths in the main squares of Addis Ababa. In the first year, it was estimated that 3000 devices (television sets) reached households in Addis Ababa (Hamere Selase, 1957 E.C.).

In order to reach the wide Ethiopian community, the mobile crew of the television program traveled to document culture, traditions, and developments around the country (Ethiopian Radio and Television Program Magazine, 1964). Various development and construction works in different areas, such as road, industrial, and agricultural developments, were aired in documentary format and presented to the public for viewing. Above all, educational programs and entertainment were given special attention in the television system, so it is known that the Ethiopian Television broadcasted educational programs for students in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Arts. Since 1966, about 50 schools in Addis Ababa had been using programs prepared for the didactic process. No fewer than 37 programs were broadcasted every week. By then, it is worth mentioning that the English language was popular in television programs. The results of the television educational program can perhaps be seen somewhat in the comments given by the viewers to Ms. Almaz Abera the first female, who hosted the program "English on TV". When Mrs. Almaz buys things in shopping stores, a big-eyed, seven-year-old child, with surprise, tells Almaz, "We all love you in our family. I also study English every Sunday with you on TV. Father reprimanded us for eating our dinner early so we could watch your program". Therefore, it can be said that the Ethiopian Television Service was an organization that left a significant mark on the educational development of the country (Ministry of Information 1959, p.34).

The organization strengthened its institutional capacity, established Studio B in 1973, and organized the department with VTR, telecine, and studio control equipment. The purpose was to organize and record various shows and dramas. Of the different programs that the television company was producing, a music and a game program to entertain the viewers were two of them. In addition to this, the discussion show (produced by Asamnew Gebrewold), sports by Solomon Tesema, television drama by Abate Mekuria, and the popular debate program for young people produced by the law faculty of Addis Ababa University were educational and entertaining programs popular at the time (Jibril Aba Wari & Leykun Berhanu, 2008, personal communication).

From the time of the establishment of Ethiopian Television until 1977, it was broadcasting with a low-power transmitter (500 watts), so it covered only 1 percent of the country's geographic location. It increased to 4 percent coverage 12 years later, in 1977, since its establishment. This can be considered a slow technological and coverage development.

Structure of the Ethiopian Television

From its establishment in 1964 to 1976, for 11 consecutive years, it had five departments. They were the engineering department, administration and finance, programming, advertising sales, and film departments.

The General Manager or Director of Ethiopian Television was the head of the office and was governed under the Minister of Information and Tourism. Each section had 28 different sub-sections, each containing five different sections. In particular, the program section was divided into six sections, namely Amharic news, English news, local programs, foreign programs, traffic control, and training sub-sections. This department not only prepared the daily news in Amharic and English but also local

and foreign programs. It also deployed, supervised, and directed the studio programming of the station (Leykun, 1994).

The second structural change was made in 1977, and this structure was changed for the third time after the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Front (EPRDF) took control of the country in 1991. At this time, the Ethiopian Television was headed by a department head who was directly responsible to the Minister of Information. This new structure organized nine departments for the second time under five divisions (ibid, 1994).

Advertisements on ETS

Advertising in Ethiopia began with the publication of newspapers, which began to be published after 1929. In particular, the expansion of printing houses and the establishment of radio broadcasting service allowed advertising to gain a wider space (Bahru, 2002:189; Ministry of Information, 1973). It is known that the annual budget of the Ethiopian Television Service was about 500,000 Birr, funded by the government, and from internal advertising revenue, and business license payment. The Ethiopian Television Service had been providing services from seven seconds to 60 seconds by setting the advertisement payment rate since the first year. Television advertising services were divided into three categories: live commercials, fixed spots, and news adjacencies. Customers who brought advertisements frequency from 52 times to 260 times had a discount that ranged from 2.5% to 12.5%.

Table 2: Statement of Advertising Rates (January to August, 1964)

Spots rate	one time (Birr)	52 times 2.5% (Discount)	104 times 5% (Discount)	156 times 7.5% (Discount)	206 times 10% (Discount)	More than 206 times 12.5%
60 Seconds	42.00	40.95	39.90	38.85	37.80	36.75
45 Seconds	35.00	34.12	33.25	32.37	31.50	30.62
30 Seconds	28.00	27.30	26.60	25.90	25.20	24.50
15 Seconds	17.50	17.06	16.62	16.18	15.75	15.31
7 Seconds	10.50	10.24	9.98	9.72	9.45	9.19

Source: Ethiopian Broadcasting Service: Radio and Television Program Schedule, January-August 1964.

Ethiopian Television used to prepare a special magazine (the Radio-TV Guide) for its programs, which introduces the general situation of the organization. It also used to publish a three-month series of programs in the same magazine. The cost of advertising was also disclosed in the magazine. The daily program lists were published in the *Addis Zemen* and *Ethiopian Herald* newspapers.

As can be understood from the television special magazine, various commercial and service announcements were presented to the public. Among them, companies such as Phillips Ethiopia, Darmar Shoes, Ethiopian Tourist Organization, Addis Ababa Bank Share Company, Universal Advertising Company, Wonji Sugar, Zodiac, Oris, Yomesan Medicine, Ras Hotel, Alitalia, and Imperial Insurance were the prominent ones.

The Ethiopian Television: An African Voice

When Ethiopian Television was established, it was a time when many African countries got independence from colonial rulers. The political fever of the time was aimed at promoting pan-Africanism and fighting apartheid. Thus, independent and home-owned television stations were established in Ethiopia and Liberia. Ethiopian television followed the emperor's diplomatic line and started to become the voice of Africa.

In 1935, in front of the assembly of the members of the League of Nations, the Emperor appeared and made a historic speech. In particular, his speech "God and history will stand as witnesses to the judgment you give" (BlackPast, 2008) touched the hearts and minds of many freedom-loving people. Even after independence, it cannot be denied that it was done following the wisdom required by contemporary diplomacy to protect the national interest. The principles that Ethiopia's foreign relations had been following were peaceful coexistence, neutrality, and standing up to the United Nations Charter and the Organization of African Unity Charter. After many diplomatic upheavals, the Organization of African Unity was established, and Addis Ababa became the political capital of Africa. Ethiopia, which is governed by the principle of neutrality, has contributed to the resistance of the movement of independent countries. After the 1960s, Ethiopia's foreign relations focused more on Africa. This was the period when the pan-Africanism movement was strengthened and the continental organization with its office in Addis Ababa was established. As a result of Ethiopia's diplomatic efforts, the African Economic Commission office was established in Addis Ababa in 1958 (UNECA, 2018).

Ethiopia's support for pan-Africanism and the anti-apartheid movement did not stop there. By supporting the African freedom movement, the fighters of the movement were given training, work, salary, and education opportunities. In 1962, Nelson Mandela and others were trained at a fast-track facility at Kolfe (Addis Ababa). Nelson Mandela (Mandela, 1995) testified to this fact in his autobiography. Jomo Kenyatta, the leader of Kenya's Mao Mao movement, was imprisoned for seven years when his daughter was paid 250 shillings per month through the Kenyan Ethiopian consulate. Similarly, Nyerere, the Tanzanian struggle leader, had his monthly salary paid from the Ethiopian government coffer (Tilahun, 1996).

In June 1968, when the Second Conference of Independent African States was organized in Addis Ababa, different views of pan-Africanism began to be reflected. Emperor Haile Selassie reconciled the ideas of Kwame Nkrumah and the opposing ideas of other factions to create a common understanding. Addis Ababa hosted a historic conference in 1971, where two opposing parties were able to participate. Addis Ababa was chosen as the main seat of the organization as a result of the diplomatic recognition to Ethiopia's efforts in the process, and Emperor Haile Selassie became the first chairman (Addis Ababa, 2000). At this time, Ethiopian television went beyond being pan-Ethiopian to being the voice of Africans and providing news and program coverage to its fellow Africans in various ways.

Even though the *Derg regime* was characterized by dictatorship that oppressed the people of the country, the Ethiopian television had been broadcasting a one-hour program in English since the liberation of Zimbabwe in April 1980. Then another

half-hour program was opened for South Africa and SWAPO (Namibia) patriots in November 1982 and was broadcasted to South Africa (Addis Ababa Centenary, 1979). Although the programs are broadcast in radio studios, Ethiopian radio and television are remembered in history for their contribution to the struggle against colonialism. That is why, in the history of Africa, Ethiopian television is said to have been the first voice of Africans to promote pan-Africanism (Borgelt, as quoted in Birhanu, 2009)

Ethiopian Television in the Derg Era (1974 to 1991)

The approach of Ethiopian television during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie had allegiance to the feudal system. After the *Derg* took power in 1974, it continued to use television as a propaganda tool to consolidate its power (Leykun, 1994; Birhanu, 2009). From the middle of July 1974, the *Derg's* focus of propaganda was on the power structures and officials of the Haile Selassie's government, and persistently continued to denigrate the emperor's regime. The *Derg* was active in using television for its propaganda work. Jonathan Dinbelbi's "Hidden Hunger," transmitted with the coined title "We do not have a gift to offer on this New Year's Day to the people of Ethiopia," was presented on the eve of September 1975. The viewers shed tears, feeling grief deep in their bones (Mengistie, 2000). The *Derg's* propaganda campaign continued to intensify its socialist campaign and to abhor the feudal regime.

According to Kiflu (1991), in February and March of 1975, the daily activities of radio, television, and newspapers became ways to convey the message to youth not to resist the *Derg's* repression and to reprimand them with a stern warning: "If you resist, you will be punished mercilessly." After such a TV's presentation, the right to hold a peaceful demonstration, assembly, or speech was prohibited and repressed by decree. As Maeregu noted (1995: 129), "the *Derg* began to control the daily activities of journalists working in the print and electronic media by assigning its cadres (ፆለውጥ ሐዋርያ - the Apostles of the Revolution)" and explained the brutality of the censorship. As journalistic professionalism was dominated by directives poured down from cadres, journalists stuck to ceremonial functions.

The *Derg* made the second structural adjustment in 1977 to establish the "Ethiopian Television Department". This structure is divided into four departments: programming, production services, news and current affairs, and engineering departments. The departments had different subsidiary departments in their work, and the overall television work activity was managed by the head of the department, who was accountable to the Ministry of Information. In general, the structure was guided by authoritarian media theory. The media in general, ETV in particular, operated under a philosophy of Ethiopian Workers Party line and the achievement of socialist goals. Brook (2000: 28) stated that the *Derg* aimed at fighting cultural imperialism to resist foreign cultural influence due to its [socialist] ideology.

The programs and news were organized to cover agriculture, industry, health, the activities of public organizations, and the general situation of urban society, while all programs were analyzed from the perspective of socialist principles. The entertainment programs were presented by individual journalist's efforts, and they took a totally different approach from the previous TV presentation of Emperor Haile Selassie. During the *Derg regime*, national issues increased from 20 percent to 36 percent, and foreign films and documentaries decreased from 80 percent to 64

percent. Despite this, the foreign documentaries and films that were presented were from various socialist countries and were far from national identity, and as result they were rarely accepted by the large TV audience. During the *Derg* regime, the Ethiopian Television broadcasted 31 different programs, which were divided into three categories: informative, educational, and entertaining programs (Leykun, 1994). Of the presentations, informational programs accounted for 51.6 percent, educational 35.48 percent, and entertainment 12.94 percent. This distribution shows that a television channel had seriously compromised the amount of entertainment it should contain.

It is useless to condemn all programs presented at that time; for example, according to Meseret (2013), credit should be given to ETV for acquainting the public with different ethnic groups and their cultures. In particular, "The Women's Show" promoted the cultural values of the women of various Ethiopian peoples, "from kitchen to the square," (ከማጅት እስከ አደባባይ) made great efforts to eliminate harmful traditional practices and male dominance. In addition, shows such as "Traveling Camera Show" (ተጓዥኛ ካሜራ) played a significant role in connecting people from different ethnic groups.

Another serious hiccup at the television station was the provision of technical equipment. It was difficult to make the films from socialist countries compatible with western recording equipment for broadcast. The western technical equipments were not compatible to record and show films from the socialist countries. In 1977 Studio "B" was established, and the studio was out of the original studio. The establishment of this studio was used to record various programs, such as music shows, dramas, and discussions.

It is known that studio "A" started its transmission in 1976 and studio "B" started in 1977. Both studios were equipped with state-of-the-art color studios, telecines, VTRs, and master control rooms. Two mobile studios (OB vans) were provided to the site to celebrate the founding anniversary of the Ethiopian Workers Party (EWP) and the 10th Revolution Day. The mobile studios that were purchased were used to film and broadcast the celebrations of the revolution and military parades, as well as assemblies. It can also be said that the introduction of color television was also the result of the development of technology itself. The transition to color television has helped the audience switch from black and white to color television displays.

In 1976, various Umatic high- and low-band machines were arranged in the studio, along with various VHS and Betacam machines.

In order to expand the broadcasting horizon of Ethiopian television, different broadcasting towers were installed in different parts of the country. After 1974, the transmission tower that was limited to former Shawa Province was installed in 21 transmission stations in all provinces except Arsi Province (Leykun, 1994). As a result, it has greatly contributed to the increase in the number of television viewers.

In collaboration with the Ethiopian Telecommunication Authority, international programs were received by satellite beginning in 1980. The Moscow Olympics, where Mrutse Yiftar won the double gold medal in the 5000 and 1000 meters race, was transmitted live. Since 1986, efforts have been made to satisfy the audience's need by broadcasting world football matches on satellite.

Although journalists working in the television station tried to satisfy the interest of the public, it was remembered that the television cadres assigned to the station created serious professional hurdles. It should not be forgotten that there was a time when the morale of the journalists fell because there was a lot of pressure and scrutiny from high-ranking party and government officials (even by phone). Workers at the time remember that when the workers went out to the field to record a program and a car overturned, the main question asked by the cadres was not whether the professionals survived but "Did the camera survive?" This shows how the station officials didn't care about the safety of journalists (Jibril Abawari & Leykun Berhanu, 2008 E. C., personal communication).

Meseret (2013) wrote that an amazing, shameful, and crazy situation was remembered on Ethiopian Television. The head of the station at the time ordered the burning of pre-revolutionary books, assuming that the books were written with feudal and religious values. And after some of them were burned, Dr. Aleme Eshete, professor of history at Addis Ababa University, boldly argued with the official to stop his madness. This incident clearly depicts the moral degradation of the cadres at that time.

Brave journalists such as Solomon Khifle, who reminds us of the state of Ethiopian television at that time, will not be forgotten by the viewers of that time. The action took place at Gefersa Park while the musicians were having a fun time, while on the other hand, a rattle-dressed little boy looked at the dancers with astonishment as if they "came from the alien world". The fact that Ethiopian television transmitted this type of show caused great anger among the *Derg* authorities. Journalist Solomon and the head of the television station, Tefera Gezew, were fired from the station via a letter and order from Shambel Fikersalase Wogderes. Solomon was transferred to the audiovisual department of the Disaster and Preparedness Commission. Then Solomon, who was not in good condition, immigrated to America, where he currently resides (Jibril Abawari & Leykun Berhanu, 2008 E. C., personal communication).

A Snapshot of TV Personalities (1964-1991)

- Samuel Fernage: Despite having a diploma from Jimma Agriculture Institute, he served as the first Ethiopian television director in 1964.
- Azaria Kiros, Hailemariam Goshu, and Abdu Muzein would be remembered for their competence and leadership at the station. Solomon Tesema (who worked on the Sports Program) and Abate Mekuria (who worked on television dramas) were well-known TV personalities that should be remembered in the historical chapter of ETV. Also in the camera section, Kasa Mehrete, Elias Biru, Desta Gebremedhin, Beyene Woldegiorgis, and Abraham Samuel were remembered for their technical delicacy. Kasaye Damana, who was the head of programming for Ethiopian Television, Berhanu Sintayehu, who organized the television engineering department, and Gesese Abai, the chief engineer, were adroit technical professionals of that period.
- Getachew Hailemariam: (Head of the news department). He was remembered for his special talent for TV news making and presentations. He was sober-minded before his audience without panicking even in the face of a technical

failure, which happened repeatedly at the time (Jibril Abawari & Leykun Berhanu, 2008 E. C., personal communication).

- Jibril Abawari: Since 1967, he served as a studio chief supervisor, head of production division, and senior expert on Ethiopian television for 27 consecutive years.
- Leykun Birhanu: He has served the company as camera person and Planning and Research Service senior staff since 1964. Above all, he is the person who compiled and organized the history of Ethiopian television. If he had not organized the history of television, it would not have been possible to find basic documentation about the station.

Some Case - Histories of ETV During the Two Periods

Presented below are excerpts from historical reminiscences of the station. Herewith briefly summarized to show the political and administrative conditions of the time (Jibril, 2008 E. C.).

- There was a strong and frequent student movement opposing the Emperor's backward feudal rule in the 1970s. The officials of the station decided to transmit Emperor Haile Selassie's reprimanding speech broadcast on television. Because the technical equipment used at the time was old and backward, the speech of the Emperor that was going to be broadcast in the studio was muted and the station was not able to transmit it. At the time, this caused a lot of anger at the television station and the Ministry of Information which can be considered as sabotage done by ETV.
- The Minister of Defense of the German Democratic Republic would visit Ethiopia in 1978. Even though the media note was sent from the newsroom to the production room to be booked, the camera crew remained unprepared. Later, when the matter came to light, a camera was sent to the airport, but it was late and arrived after the minister left Bole International Airport. The station failed to catch the official visit. And Abdu Muzein, who was the head of television at the time, Jibril Abawari, the head of production; Abraham Abebe, the head of distribution; Aleme Endelibe (chief secretary); and Markos (messenger) were arrested and sent to the notorious Central Police Station. The secretary, Aleme, was sent back to her home, while the others were detained at the *Derg* office for three days and were released. At the time, it was difficult to be released after committing such mundane mistakes, and any one can be labeled as counter-revolutionary, but the workers were lucky enough to be reprimanded and returned to their work place.
- It was 1991 when Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, a close friend of Mengistu Hailemariam, visited Ethiopia. Their visit included Agarfa Agricultural College and the National Military Service Center, so their trip was made by helicopter. Two news bulletins was aired regarding the visit of both dignitaries. However, when the news was aired, it was presented as a distortion and mix-up of the visiting place of agricultural college for the national military service center. At the time, committing such a mistake was considered a serious crime, so the director Tamrat Tadese, VTR video maker Zemikael Abaye, and supervisor Habte Gameda were arrested without any legal warrant. About the mistake made at the time, Habte explained the technical failure of the film to the security officer about the visit made by a helicopter, and the lead-in picture was a starburst. However, the security chief

was not convinced to accept the explanation and they were jailed for three days as it was taken as a plot to dehumanize the revolutionary leader, Mugabe. Even though they returned to their workplace, they were subjected to a moral breakdown.

- An Incident involving Colonel Mengistu Hailemariam: Colonel Mengistu Hailemariam was traveling to the Soviet Union for a visit in 1991. After the "President Mengistu paid a visit to the Soviet Union" lead-in was presented, the light went off, and due to this technical failure, the reading of the news was thwarted. The municipal compound (today's municipality of Addis Ababa), which was a former Ethiopian Television station, was immediately surrounded by the army in anticipation of a coup d'état. The site became tense with tension. At the time, the concerned officials, Dr. Colonel Feleke Gedlegiorgis (Minister of Information) and Engineer Gesese Abai (Chief Engineer of the Station), arrived at the station quickly to solve the problem. Later, other officials, including Wole Gurmu (Head of Television), Ato Tekeze Showa Aitenfsu (Minister of Mines), and Colonel, Engineer Tesema Abaderash (Head of Electricity Corporation), followed them for further investigation of the case. All these problems were caused by an electricity line failure. Col. Dr. Feleke yelled at the head of the electricity corporation, saying, "You have destroyed our gadgets!" Finally, after the technical hitch was solved and the situation had been finally resolved, it was decided to buy a generator for the station as a permanent solution. At that time, the security officer said inquired to see how the broadcast was interrupted and started with the generator, so he rehearsed it from the beginning to the end and went back with confidence. The Caterpillar generator used by the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) until now was also purchased and put into use at that time. In those days, when such incidents occurred, the journalists and technical staff were subjected to political interpretations and accusations. It is necessary to note that managers used to protect their subordinates from danger (Getu Temesgen, 2008, personal communication) at such times.
- Journalists embedded in the army: During the *Derg* regime, television crew traveled with soldiers to Eritrea. Zenawi Tesfamikael, Edalamaw Abay, Haillu Legse, and reporter Zacharias Ekam sacrificed their lives while embedded in the war zone with the Ethiopian army and reporting on the current war situation. Bekele Namera also lost an eye on the battlefield.

Concluding Remarks

From such historical investigations, we learn more about major changes in the development of television in Ethiopia. As we can see from the history of the Ethiopian Television, the organization was established with a very modest plan and was expected to expand in its future endeavors. During the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie and the *Derg* military government, the station went through many ups and downs in terms of technology development, manpower capacity, and professional hurdles. It can be remembered that, due to the repressive regimes, the journalists challenged their professional independence within the existing political systems. This caused misunderstanding on the audience side and even viewed them with suspicion on their professional integrity.

A very important move that would be mentioned in the historical journey is that Ethiopia's foreign policy began to focus on Africa in the 1950s, and the station gave a special place to pan-Africanism and the anti-apartheid movements.

Ethiopian Television is a homegrown organization developed by locals, even though it had the support of foreign experts in its operation. It is true that the station did not grow up under the influence of colonial powers like other African countries.. Although it has contributed to nation-building during the last two periods of the "miraculous window" through the implementation of socialist propaganda ideology, the station has served as a propaganda tool of the regimes. During the era of the Emperor, the station strived a lot to build the image of the king, and during the *Derg* era of the revolution, it cultivated the personality cult of Mengistu and the fruits of the revolution. With the chance of being an independent public media, the station proclaimed itself a partisan station, where its popularity has been drastically diminished by its audiences.

When examined from the perspective of infrastructure development, it has changed its breadth of coverage from a narrow area around Addis Ababa and its surroundings to a national level covering a wide radius. It is important to realize that, although the programming approach, which was mostly influenced by foreign films, was changed during the revolution and most of the programming was made to have a national format and appeal.

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