


# The Invention of Ethiopia: The making of a Dependent Colonial State in Northeast Africa.

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Author(s): Kumssa Asfaw .

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Article Preview :

Ethiopia is one of more than fifty politically troubled countries in the world. It has been haunted for decades by war, superpower intervention, famine and armed national conflicts. For the past three decades, Ethiopia has never experienced peace and stability. The root cause of the conflict is embedded in the domestic socioeconomic structure of the society and the power relations that exist between the various nations/nationalities that inhabit the country. Despite its claims to a continuous independent history, the Ethiopian state, like most Third World states, was in fact created by colonial powers through conquest, coercion and brutal oppression rather than voluntary integration of its nationalities. This gave rise to national liberation wars, various groups fighting for complete independence or autonomy from the central government. These wars have left a trail of human tragedy and economic havoc. The Invention of Ethiopia is a book written to address the dynamics of state formation in Ethiopia and the genesis of

national conflict there. The authors state that the main objective of the study is to address the factors "that shaped the Empire" and have "generated the political and economic relations found there and which account for the conflict currently raging within the Empire" (p. xiii). To explain Ethiopia's present problems Ibssa and Holcomb scrutinize its past political history. Their argument for doing this is that present political and national problems are embedded in the historical evolution of the Ethiopian state itself. To clarify the issue under discussion the authors pose the following important questions: 1) how did the economic relations which characterize the empire come to be established? 2) how have they been maintained and...

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