



Identity politics as neoliberal/neocolonial ideology versus social democratic ideology

“The basis of the home is community and togetherness” and I stress that social democracy strive to “break down the barriers that...separate citizens.” [The SAP’s leader Per Albin Hansson, Sweden]

“By breaking down and separating things in this way they are dividing the movement, diverting attention from the main issues and pitting different groups of the oppressed against each other.” [Ademe Bilal].

“Clearly, underlying identity politics and intersectionality is an inadequate view of what it is to be a human being: that we have material needs, a view that abstracts from the fact that the humankind ‘must first of all eat, drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, science, art, religion, etc.’” [Engels, 1883]

Prologue

“The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.” [Marx and Engels (1848)]

Yes, hitherto exiting Ethiopian society is the history of struggle for people’s democratic system, though opportunistic intellectuals predictably favored despotic centralism wherever they are leading movements groping for an answer, as is the case now in the country. The present futile - with no social principle-Prosperous -OLF Party is the worst possible organizational model for the working classes in social revolution which has already broken out into unheard and untold mass murder, genocide, which is ethnofascist and ethnocentric movement. Social democracy (democracy for all) has to get its head straight, standing for the real liberation of the entire working classes: *nothing will more enslave a young labor movement to an intellectual elite hungry for power than this bureaucratic straight jacket, which will immobilize the social revolutionary transformative praxis and turn it into a robotization manipulated by a “Prosperous -OLF-Party, and the protagonists’ (Abiy’s and his opportunistic satellites’) obsession with “identity” and “ethnocentrism” are self-defeating and self-fulfilling.*

In the sixtieth’s social revolution -propelled by EPRP- has defined social democracy as a large contingent of all workers who grasped its class interests, and a “democratic regime of political liberty” that will allow the people vanguard to affirm and realize its capacity for self-direction,

however Abiy-Melese snuffed out the spirit of freedom in the name of “Prosperous party.” On the other hand, the sixtieth’s social movement was one of the most searing developments in modern Ethiopian history. It abounded with noble visions, resounded with magnificent rhetoric, and ended in nightmarish despair. Their visions/objective of the common ground and of the overwhelming majority, as important components of EPRP’s principles/ politics. There are two aspects:

- The overwhelming majority of people experience one common fate, that is they are exploited, and
- this exploited majority are subjected to one or more of the many mechanisms of oppression (ethnic, gender, caste, etc.), all of which represent one experience: attack on basic democratic rights.

This article reiterates the idea that the EPRP principle has taken oppression seriously, and it suggests a need for a change in our language in the discussions on social oppression. It argues against the language of feminism and anti-ethnic division of which the principle is supposed to be a part. While EPRP-ism must fight for an end to oppression of women and ethnic division or ethnic hegemony, feminism and anti-ethnic-supremacy and the rest of **the identity politics movement** will not necessarily fight for an end to class oppressions (as the current murder of the peasantry and all other working classes by Woyane-OLF guillotine) , because at a theoretical level they severely downplay, or neglect, the importance of class oppressions, and indeed deny the primacy of class struggle for social democracy. ***Social democratic politics and identity politics are not unrelated, but there are significant differences. The social democratic politics has the ability to subsume under it some of the legitimate concerns of identity politics, but the scope of identity politics is too narrow to subsume under its social democratic politics.***

Pure Identity Politics disguises/shadows class oppression and undermines the establishment of democratic regime

Strictly speaking, however, identity politics is a system of politics within which there are two interrelated components: **the politics of recognition/respect and the politics of limited economic distribution, with the former being the dominant component and influencing the latter element.** The economic distribution in question is generally within narrow sectors defined on the basis of identity (e.g., academic jobs for women or blacks), without any linkage to the agenda of the abolition of class relations that cause inequality. **The aim of identity politics is to hide/downplay class politics (more on this later). Here are some illustrative examples of identity politics.** When Dr. Abiy, an opportunistic leader and war-monger technofascist politician appeals to all Oromo people to vote for her because ‘hi is Oromo’, that is **identity politics**, which hides the ruling class bias of the politician. When these despotic politicians do nothing to counter genocide and interethnic conflict, and when these leaders do nothing to improve the material conditions of the oppressed overwhelming majorities, these politicians are **practicing ‘identity politics.’**

Identity politics (especially as it circulates in the academia) is generally informed by the poststructuralist mode of thinking popularized by the likes of the biased Oromo elites, opportunistic

ethnocentric elites, other parochial thinkers. The identity mode of thinking is characterized by such things as:

- resorting to subjectivity and advocating for the change of people's views about one another as a fundamental strategy to cause changes in society.
- under-emphasis on, or neglect of, the materiality and objectivity of human life.
- ontological prioritization of the individual, often treating it as the primary site of oppression.
- rejection of a systemic view of society and advocating for atomization (individual as the basic unit of analysis for all implications of social life);
- inadequate attention to the need to explain things as opposed to descriptive narratives.
- seeing society as divided into groups based on identity, and neglecting the class division.
- rejecting revolution by the working class aiming to overthrow capitalism and its state; and favouring mainly small-scale, often localized, and (discursive/linguistic) acts of resistance by a person or groups of persons defined on the basis of identity/identities

Identity politics and/as imperialist/neocolonialist ideology Identity politics – in terms of its underlying thinking and its practice – in many ways an ideology of neoliberal society. The implication is that: those who subscribe to identity politics break down the struggle into its smallest component parts: pitting women against men, disabled women against able-bodied women, and so on. By breaking down and separating things in this way they are dividing the movement, diverting attention from the main issues and pitting different groups of the oppressed against each other—just like the Abiy-Melees ethnic and clan division for their own political advantage. The objective relations of class are transformed into a subjective process.

Notional cognition of world history and Social democratic politics

What does notional cognition actually mean more specifically?

The object of notional cognition is always some organic whole, a totality, or a system in its different developmental periods. This can be the law and social order, the economic life of a given age, or the history of the whole of human society or of its subsystems, example, of its art etc. We understand an object notionally if we reveal its proper logic, and we show it in this proper logic.

This is possible only if previously we grasp the most inner and ultimate determinants of the object through detailed study and intensive analysis. These last, abstract, determining elements constitute the actual starting points of notional cognition. The final elements function as ordering principles in cognition. We refer all components and all constituents of the object to them directly or indirectly. Thus, notional understanding moves from the abstract, from the simple, the determining to the concrete, to the complex, the defined. As its result we get the concrete object in its proper order, in its proper logic. The result, the object reproduced in the mind in its proper logical structure is called the notion of the object. Thus, the notion is actually a form of knowledge, a theory built from a multitude of statements following a proper logic. The concrete notion of a concrete object is the final product of notional cognition.

The starting points of notional cognition are the last determining elements of the object. They constitute the abstract notion of the object into which all parts of the concrete object are going to be integrated later on, of course without any strain. Though only abstractly for the time being, this starting point has to span the whole of the future concrete notion, containing the frames and ordering principles of the concrete notion, of the concrete theory. It has to contain all those frames

into which the concrete parts get embedded, and all those ordering principles according to which this embedding is complete.

So, the notional cognition starts out from the abstract notion, and in its final result arrives at the concrete notion. That is why it was designed as notional cognition. This intellectual motion stretching from the abstract notion to the concrete notion is the way of conceptual 'recreation', the theoretical reproduction of the concrete object. But this logical and theoretical inference moving step by step has some significance beyond itself as it reproduces, intended or not, in its main features the historical way along which the concrete object itself developed. The notional cognition as the theoretical-logical advancement from the abstract notion to the concrete notion throws light at the same time on the real history of the origin of the concrete object. The notional cognition is essentially cognition *post festum* (after the fact-Latin after the feast). It cannot be done at just any time. Its time comes, when the object of cognition has developed wholly or at least to a greater degree historically. The notional cognition is more than a simple scientific program. We should see it as a special form of scientific thinking or of human understanding, a special philosophical concept of science, bearing its own method within itself. Such a concept of science, and with it of notional cognition as a scientific program does not come from Marx originally, but from Hegel. 'The aim of philosophy is the thinking and notional grasping of truth' (Hegel, 1928, p. 47).

From the concretized notional cognition, we know objectively that the immediate medium of the productive forces is formed by the relations of production and the totality of the relations of production forms, on the other hand the real basis, that is the foundation on which a legal and political superstructure arises and to which definite social forms of consciousness correspond.

Scientific notional cognition deciphers that the social form of both pre-capitalist society and capitalism are upside down, inverted, contradictory forms of production, though the later is, in a certain sense, a dehumanized world in which an inhuman power came to rule. This power is money, which breaks all traditional bonds, disintegrates all organic communities, and leaves no other nexus between one man and the other, except naked self-interest in the callous cash payment. Money became the chemical power of society, which ties the individual to people and nature. It is much worse that money has grown too important. Getting and acquiring and accumulating it has become the aim of life-becoming a blind power above humanity. A new world is built under the existing capitalist social form, the exchange-value or money. As soon as this world has been built the existing social form yields its place to a new social form that comes into being with new conditions of life. **This form of society, social democratic society, can be achieved only through social revolution, that is the social form of capitalism, exactly as a consequence of this, gives its place to a new social form, the social form of social democratic form of society.**

Note that all that has been said implies that the main means of production of capitalism and social democratic society is the same machinery. There is a typological sameness between the main means of production of capitalist and that of social democratic society since social democratic societies (example Sweden, Norway, or Nordics) is also an industrial civilization as capitalism is, but in a form that is more accomplished and more developed. Social democracy takes extremely seriously the impact of social oppression on the lives of the oppressed and the need to eliminate it. There is objective evidence that social oppression is a reality, that millions suffer because of it. In all class-structured societies, we know that those classes (slaves, serfs, peasants, workers) that contribute the greatest amount of labor to the productive system receive the least, while those (slave masters,

nobles, landlords, capitalists) that contribute the least amount of labor receive the most. An exploitative system has two sets of components. There are:

- first, the exploitative techniques, the precise instrumentalities through which economic surplus is pumped out of the direct producers: slavery, plunder, tribute, rent, taxation, usury, and various forms of unequal exchange
- second, there is the state, an organization which monopolizes violence and is thereby able to physically coerce the exploited population.

The exploitative system is the instrumentality through which a predator-prey relationship is established within the human species, only here the stakes are human labor energy rather than energy locked up in animal flesh. The differentials of wealth and prestige which emerge from this predatory relationship simultaneously reflect and legitimize the differential consumption of labor energy by predator and prey. Social democrats, accept, although in varying degree, they are (excerpts from Amare Meshesha book):

- a planned economy geared towards the fulfillment of human need of all rather than a free market geared to profits for a few. The collective good is considered primary because it determines, in large part, the well-being of individuals. society is not owned or controlled by a powerful few because such a system would violate the collective human nature of people. Given this collective nature, all persons would participate in its governance
- public ownership of productive property for the benefit of a rather than private ownership for the benefit of a restricted circle of private owners. Unlike neo-liberals, social democrats believe that the role of the state is to promote the collective good and play a positive role in the economy. They believe that the state should carry out public control of the major means of production to meet social needs rather than individual profit, regulate the market and bring about greater equality in the distribution of society's resources, increase democracy in both the political and economic spheres, and protect the environment through centralized collective planning. Social democrats do not see this important role of the state being carried out satisfactorily in a capitalist system, instead, they believe that by electing social democratic governments and building the welfare state that the preconditions for a socialist society can be put in place as part of the transformation of from capitalism to socialism
- equality of condition, or at least the serious effort to reduce, as much as possible, major inequalities of wealth, income, social status, and political influence. Socialists and social democrats underlined coherently the nature of a just society from a socialist or communitarian perspective as one where the members of that society govern their relationships the ideals of sharing, co-operation, eco-altruism, and where the values are more equal sharing of the material benefits of society, greater sharing of opportunities to develop one's full potentials.
- a belief that selfishness is the result of living in our present flawed social institutions and that social change can produce less selfish people who are concerned with the welfare of others. Social democrats have vision of progressively developing the welfare state and using it as a steppingstone towards a socialist society. They will promote a variety of redistributive measures such as graduated or progressive tax system, full employment policies, and well-developed social welfare programs.

In Sweden representative autonomous national institutions of employers and trade unions representing employees as producers but also as citizens worked in harmony together in the creation of a common interest. In doing so they were to provide the necessary institutional means for the

construction of a corporatist, but democratic and pluralistic model based on the principles of a **humanistic rationalism**. As one Swedish theorist has written recently:

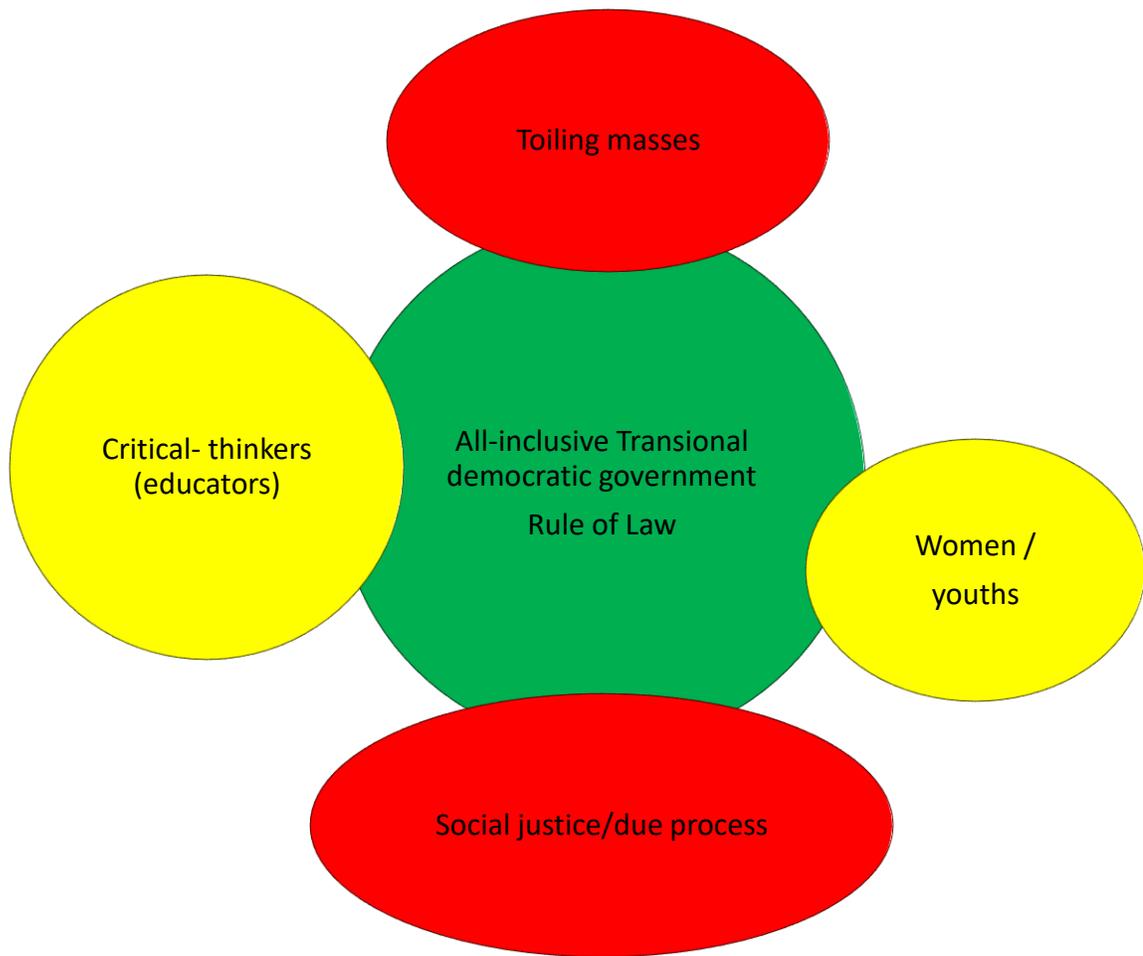
“Few social experiments have caught the imagination of politicians and students of political economy like the Swedish Model. To successive generations of the centre-left searching for their Third Way Sweden was something of a paradise. This exotic Nordic country was a kind of real-life Utopia, an idyllic country full of beautiful people with a Social Democratic government which worked, a nation combining high rates of economic growth with unprecedented levels of equality.”

Political visions of the EPRP’s social democratic program

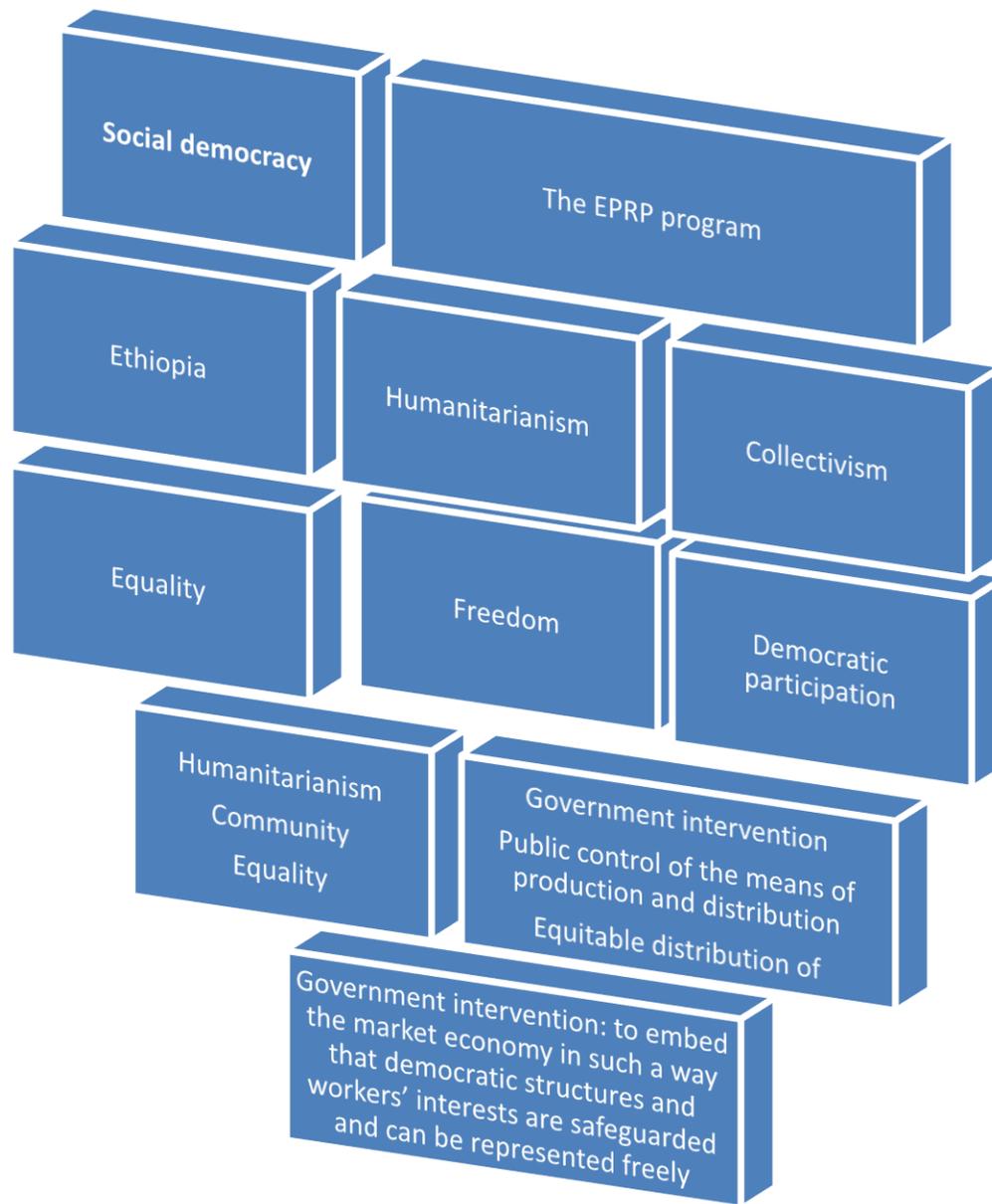
In order to redress people’s inequality in capacity and power, the social democratic state-being **transformed via the al-inclusive people’s democratic institutions-** will have to try to emancipate and empower those who are relatively deprived. The twin goals of emancipation and empowering can be identified in the range of policies, under the EPRP’s principles and as a social democratic party, have been distinctively prepared to propose and contemplate. ***The EPRP believes that in order to equalize capacities, the state must emancipate people from such conditions as penury, ignorance and vulnerability; in particular, vulnerability to sickness and disability. It is no surprise therefore to find that social democrats emphasize the importance of social security, public housing, compulsory education, public health care, and the like.*** Social security programs provide a welfare state, which redistributes income to counteract poverty and provide a “safety net” for the sick, unemployed, or retirees. Moreover, public affairs are implemented by elected leaders in a democratic system, and unity of working classes, through unions and worker cooperatives.

The cornerstone of political visions of the EPRP as social democratic includes:

- *the state has positive role to play in society: a strong state is needed to regulate social and economic redistribution programs. Social democrats have the vision of encouraging more service user involvement in the delivery of public services, such as health or social services, and more community development directed at boosting the power of people with respect to local, regional, and national governments.*
- *capitalism can be transformed into socialism by social democratic government. Trade policies that protect the interests of domestic labor and industry, or fair trade, are preferable to unrestricted free trade.*
- *the state should encourage broad participatory decision-making in all areas of life: government officials are subject to frequent elections, mandates from their community, and recall.*



- **Unifying institutions that constitute elements of transitional democratic state that incorporates natural rule of law. The Martyrs-lead social revolution against neocolonialism/neoliberalism had been bound to assume a profoundly popular and distinctly national character and is bound to deepen step by step, developing into desperate clashes with imperialism and shaking the very foundations of imperialism-groomed feudalism and Junta-Soviet social imperialism.**



Overview of the EPRP's Social democratic Paradigm and Social Work Ideals

Question for critical thinking (source: Mullaly, p 137)

Jesus Christ has been described as a radical and a socialist because he lived according to collectivist principle, wanted more sharing of society's resources, challenged (and was crucified by) the status quo. However, it is often the most conservative groups in society such as the religious right or the Moral Majority who most decry socialism and support conservative cause. How do you account for this apparent contradiction?