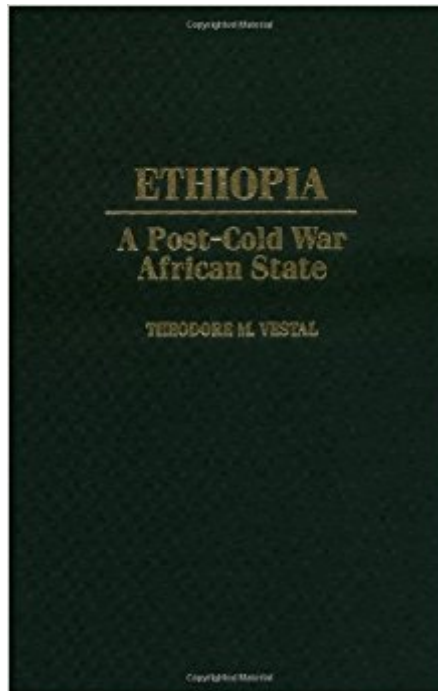




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Ethiopia: A Post-Cold War African State



Synopsis

When the oppressive Marxist-Leninist dictatorship of the Derg collapsed in 1991, there was hope that a new era might begin for a democratic Ethiopia. However, backed by the United States, the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Front established a government that would not share power. Instead of a transition to democracy, the EPRF denied opposition parties meaningful participation in elections, violated human rights, and intensified ethnic distrust among the people. According to critics, repressions of the government are on a scale equivalent to those of the world's worst dictatorships. Vestal examines the plight of the Ethiopian people and counters questionable government pronouncements. He concludes with suggestions for a revised U.S. policy toward Ethiopia and for peaceful negotiations between the government and its political opposition to develop a more democratic approach.

Ethiopia, an African nation with close ties to the United States dating from World War II, is a troubled land. When the oppressive Marxist-Leninist dictatorship of the Derg collapsed in 1991, there was hope that a new era might begin for a democratic Ethiopia. However, backed by the U.S., the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front established a government that would not share power. Instead of a transition to democracy, the EPRDF denied opposition parties meaningful participation in elections, violated human rights, and intensified ethnic distrust among the people. According to critics, repressions of the government are on a scale equivalent to those of the world's worst dictatorships. Vestal examines the plight of the Ethiopian people and counters questionable government pronouncements. He concludes with suggestions for a revised U.S. policy toward Ethiopia and for peaceful negotiations between the government and its political opposition to develop a more democratic approach.

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"The regime that overthrew the hated Derg in 1991 has operated in obscurity through the past decade. Ted Vestal's lucid, knowledgeable, and courageous book reveals the extent to which it is directed by the ethno-leninist orientations of its authoritarian elite. Must reading for all who are interested in human rights and ethnic relations in post-Communist societies."-Donald N. Levine University of Chicago

"Professor Vestal's work is a significant contribution to a realistic appraisal of contemporary Ethiopian politics. It is an eye opener. I have no doubt that it will be remembered as one of the first exposes of the subtler tyrannies of the post-Cold War world. His keen understanding of the complexities of Ethiopian politics has enabled him to capture what is truly unfolding behind the facade of 'democratization.'" -Shumet Sishagne Professor, Department of History Christopher Newport University

THEODORE M. VESTAL is Professor of Political Science at Oklahoma State University. Professor Vestal went to Ethiopia as a Peace Corps executive in 1964 and has maintained a scholarly interest in the country ever since. Following the fall of the Derg in 1991, he returned to Ethiopia as a consultant to the Council of Representatives of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia and as an international election observer. He is an editorial advisor to the Ethiopian Register.

The book scholarly depicts the true and inherent characteristics of the regime in Ethiopia. It needs to be read by all Ethiopians and friends of Ethiopia.

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