

**CALL ME BY MY NAME:** A discussion with Debteraw, XII  
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REVOLUTIONARY INSPIRATION  
VS  
WOUNDS OF HOPE

**The Past The Present \*\*\* The Future**

*No deal at Makdela Unity at Adua Debu's Release Death at Metema Peace at Adua Peace in  
Agame (Assimba) Flight to Harare Bitena at Adua Prosperity at Marcato  
Plea at the League of Nations*

***Stability with Aagmelago***

The three cornerstones upon which Ethiopia was built are FAITH, LOVE AND HOPE. Debteraw and his colleagues realized that the faith in the Ethiopian Church, the love from Monarchy/Aristocracy, and the hope from the modern schools would soon vanish as they have already failed. As an alternative, a vision and a mission to solidify the faith, to democratize the government and to reform the educational system were designed. Debteraw took the lead in organizing the clergy, the workers and the teachers. Debteraw was already empowered, unlike many of his would be comrades, by the inside information of the Imperial Palace, by the Wisdom of the Monastery and by the knowledge of the University for he studied in the three highest Institutions of Ethiopia that were powerful and relevant at the time.

As a result of Debu's high talent and capacity for change, Ethiopia has created a formidable Political Party Organization, called Ethiopian/Eritrean Peoples' Revolutionary Party otherwise known as EPRP. Thanks to Debteraw's indefatigable skill of organization. It is in par with Awate's single bullet shot heralding the long march of struggle for political change.

The rule of the Anbessa is gone; the rule by Choice (DEMOCRACIA) has arrived. Hoorah to Awate and Debteraw, that is to the bullet and the pen. What is mightier in present day of Ethiopia or Eritrea, I cannot say as both tools for change used by Shaebia and Woyane are imported.

But what went wrong if these two incidents were correct? What went wrong if both initiatives had vision and mission? Why the single bullet shot and the four letters of EPRP have failed to resolve the issue between Ethiopia and Eritrea? Is there an end in sight?

There is simple explanation but not single answer for these questions. The problem does not lie with those who started the struggle, rather it lies squarely on those individuals, groups or organizations who want quick response for questions of who, what, where and when instead of Why and How. Awate and Debteraw, on the one hand, had anticipated different conclusions. Their followers, on the other, did not like to pose the questions of why and how. They seem anemic to these two questions. So the simple thing to do would be for all of us to ask the why and how questions to find the answer because in here lie the correct and

simple answer. How Awate answered these two questions will be discussed in one of my future articles. But for now let me go back as to how Debteraw instilled and spread Revolutionary Inspirations particularly in urban areas of Ethiopia.

Debteraw's Organization of EPRP analyzed the prevailing conditions of Ethiopia before its members and supporters embarked on the Revolutionary Path. Below is how it was explained:

**FAITH:** EPRP, the agent of change for Ethiopia and Ethiopians have failed to see the faith-the love-the hope under the ancient regime of Haile Sellassie I, under the auspices of the DERG, or under the TPLF/EPRDF, no matter how they claim the history of Ethiopia to be, a century; two millennium; five millennium or more. What matters for EPRP was that the old system did not work or cannot cope up with the modern world, unless a revolution would take place.

When we say faith, a lot of people associate this word with religion. That is one aspect of faith but the other aspect is related to science - A science of principle, a Natural Habitat for the Animals. According to Debteraw, the written word from God informed him that there is no vision without preparation. The human animals of EPRP have come in the open. It was not only naturally necessary, it was also scientifically correct. All faiths of religion, politics, poverty, social etc. have come to the public debate.

If one carefully examines Debteraw's picture in Debteraw's Website, he or she can see that Debu was prepared to topple the government by wearing khaki and a bag (mind you not a gun) and an academic gown in recognition to the power of knowledge. Of course, he accepted the label of Debteraw as a token for the desire to reform the Ethiopian Church. No one, though, can see his inner belief in the website, it is written in his heart of hearts. If this three dimensional of Debteraw is not inspirational leadership, what is it then? Call me by my name. Do you live by your name? Debteraw's faith is embedded in rocks not on sands. The faith in Principle whether in Nature (science) or in Human Service was and still is the passion for Debteraw and his associates. And so the struggle continues until the Big Debteraw is released. We have to have faith in all aspects of life. Without faith, there is no hope. EPRP's faith is still intact.

**LOVE:** Love is a noble thing. It is not only human it is also Godly. Ethiopians have been practicing to love strangers for too long regardless of their guests' enmities or friendship. Ethiopians loved strangers probably more than the aliens loved themselves. But Debteraw observed or sensed that this type of love was not healthy. In fact, it demeans Ethiopians. Poverty was not a choice. When famine struck, the Tigrians and Wolloyes simply accept it as a noble task for getting assistance. (See how humble they were during "we are the world" in the musical event of 1984). Love, according to Debteraw is supposed to be a two way street.

In order to love, at least one has to be respected not only by the Almighty, at least by the donors be it foreigners or local givers. The bureaucrats of Ethiopia and the foreign businessmen or investors however we call them, all began to expropriate (take away peasants' land) and underpay workers below the minimum human living conditions. And so

Debteraw and his comrades demanded for land to the tiller and minimum wage for workers of Ethiopia. If this is not love, what is it then? Call me by my name!

That was an Ethiopian Revolutionary Inspiration. As the old traditional belief of faith and love have been shattered to the core, thousands and millions of students, workers and peasants believed in EPRP inspirational leadership. As a result of this Revolutionary Inspiration, all Ethiopians regardless of their ethnic background and nationality shared not only love towards one another but also life itself. What is your name? Call me by my name!

**HOPE:** What about Hope? Having failed in the land issue, in reforming the Abyssinian Bureaucracy and to change the curriculum for education, for whatever reasons, practically every individual including the Emperor himself desired for a change – a change for reform or revolution. However, those who wanted reform could not change the supply side of economics. They were silent not because of fear but because they cannot deliver what Ethiopians want. Galvanized by the Ethiopian students, the clergy, the nobility, the bureaucrats and the intellectuals, supported the demand side of economics resulting in the Ethiopian Revolution. Below are how different organizations; groups or fronts structured their path to hope for themselves and for their countrymen.

#### **NAME AGENDA SLOGAN PRACTICE**

Monarchy Const. Reform F'ATA (give us time) Solo DERG Revolution Revolution or Death  
Kinet chifera MIESOM-LArm UsIndoctrination ELF Independence Liberal democracy Armd struggle  
EPLF ditto Awet n'Hafash Organization TPLF separation Down with Amhara Hidden issues OLF  
CUD Federalism Victory Election

#### **EPRP Ethiopia DEMOCRACIA Unity in**

Hope is the single area where every body is still failing with the exception of EPRP's PARTY Collective Leadership. Specifically, the Wounds of Hope have emanated from the followings: -

- The Haile Sellassie regime tried to give Hope by reforming Land in the South and bring Peace in Eritrea. Too little too late.
- The DERG used Kinet as a weapon to give Hope mainly via Tilahun Gessese's song "Yitayegnal Biru'h Tesfa K'abyetu Beste Jerba". It was false Hope.
- MIESO, "Revolutionary Ethiopia or Death", through political indoctrination. They got both. Russian domination and their own death.
- ELF an Independent Eritrea via Armed struggle and a little bit of Democracy. They lost both issues to their rival.
- EPLF an Independent Eritrea and freedom in Democracy. They got one and lost the other. Harnet vs. Natsnet.
- TPLF a Separate State with the hope of Unity with Tigrai-Tigrigni population and domination over the Amhara and the Oromo. They seem to have lost all.
- OLF an Independent Oromia headed by Wellega elites and a Democratic Ethiopia taking Finfine as its seat. So far they have no control.

- EPRP simply Ethiopia/Athiopia/Othiopia/Abssynia or any name via DEMOCRACIA. They seem to have succeeded partially, for EPRP success is a journey.
- CUD Federal Ethiopia headed by “ Direct Election”. So far they have lost what they have gained.

As we can see, in today’s world everybody is crying for DEMOCARACY. And who stood for Democracy all along – It is no other than EPRP. The hope for all Ethiopians and Eritreans was dashed because of the lack of understanding of Democracia! A process for decision-making. And so all the wounds of hope are blamed not on the wrong doers but on those who took or followed the right path towards HOPE. Call me by my name. What is my name?

What about now? Let us think twice before we become destructive once more. We had enough of Anjas and Bitenas. As I have indicated in my article of June 13, 2007, **call me by my name: A debate with Debteraw, XI**. Anja refers to leadership whereas Bitena refers to our way of life (Culture). At this juncture, it is wise to rethink lest we dash our hopes when we see Democracy in the Middle East and in Africa being implemented. And so it imperative to explain what EPRP means by DEMOCRACIA.

What does Democracy meant to Ethiopians or Eritreans? Democracy is the rule by the people. But this definition does not indicate how to put it into practice (remember the question of How). In general, there are three accepted ways of practicing democracy. The Eway is the fourth way and it is the Debteraw’s way - **~Unity in Diversity~**. (Luynet Ylemlm).

Here are the three accepted ways,

- *Participatory Democracy*: The people discuss options then agree on a decision.
- *Representative Democracy*: The people choose representatives to make decisions for them
- *Direct democracy*: The people vote on options presented to them

The central theme is that there is great diversity in the ways in which the three models of democracy are put into practice. The question is how can a group make collective decisions? If we follow the democratic theory, the Ethiopian people are to rule, but how do we know what Ethiopians want. People, who need to make decisions that concern them as a group – all 77 million including Eritreans, use DEMOCRACIA or any member of individuals who must accept a collective decision. Since Participatory Democracy – give Ethiopians the power over decisions and discussions; EPRP preferred mainly this type of Democracy for its revolutionary struggle. The problem however is inherent in the decisions – making the structure of power vulnerable due to cultural biases as we have witnessed in the ANJA and BITENA cases. Otherwise, EPRP was practicing or supposed to follow these simple procedures as indicated below:

### Components parts of EPRP's collective leadership

- **Setting the Agenda:** What is question?
- **Debate:** What are the possible answers?
- **Choice:** Which answer does the people prefer?
- **Implementation:** Putting the chosen solution into practice

### *CONCLUSION*

It took about 13 years (1960-1973) for the student movement to set the agenda, seven years (1973-1980) to debate the issues, again 13 years (1980-1993) to make a choice and it is taking over the limit of 33 years (2007 - ? ) for Implementation of EPRP's agenda.

In addition to their faith for political change and love for their country, EPRP Collective leaders and members have now gained an incredible Experience and Confidence. And the Hope is still alive and well.

EPRP leaders and their followers as a rule of thumb do consider the following necessary components of participatory democracy.

- All members can raise an issue, suggest solutions, take part in final decisions
- Face-to-face meetings
- Much discussion so that all who want to contribute can be able to do so
- Tendency to want consensus.

If all are to have a say, a part in ruling, then each voice must have equal weight. When a group in society to have their views counts for more than other groups then it would be an oligarchy masquerading as democracy. As DEMOCRACIA is about choices, the democratic decision-making involves people expressing a preference for one option over the others and the final decision, reflecting those preferences. So, for the Ethiopians to rule they must have a call to their preferences weighed equally when a final decision is made. The big question then is how to determine the opinion of the group as a whole. It is only via DEMOCRACIA, a way for every EPRP member to express.

In EPRP, decisions are arrived collectively by all members after some discussion of the alternative and without recourse to vote. When such methods are adopted by more formal group this is known as participatory democracy, alias known as a **Collective Leadership in EPRP's, vocabulary.**

What is wrong with this type of leadership and follower ship? EPRP is a model for this. Let us debate, before we indulge in making a choice of that group, organization or party. EPRP is about pursuing issues and interest for oneself, community and society at large.

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\*\*\* This is food for thought.

For comments and criticisms

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