

CALL ME BY MY NAME: A commentary

Wolde Tewolde alias Obo Arada Shawl

June 1, 2007

Politics: It is an open ended Relationship. We can build or we can destroy the bridge of Relationship. It is a matter of choice. I for one have chosen to build the bridge. Actually it was my profession to build a bridge. In the field of Ethiopian politics, the ELF, OLF, EPLF, TPLF, and the rest liberation fronts have chosen to destroy the bridge. I believe because their leaders were mainly men and men usually think in terms of space – a physical space while women conceptualize in terms of Time. The era of women has finally arrived in the Ethiopian societies. Hopefully the story of MAKON within EPRP will be a guiding light for all of us - men and women.

EPRP has never attempted to destroy a bridge. EPRP considered itself as a human bridge and I want to testify that it is not dead and cannot be dead provided people are open to understand its political history, its members, supporters and its leaders. I for one have made an effort to answer the following questions for my personal judgment. By the way, I am not an EPRP apologist. I am against sky-is-falling rhetoric.

Do we know the political history of EPRP?

Do we know its members?

Do we know its supporters?

Do we know its leaders?

Until we know or make an effort to answer these basic questions, I think we should withhold our judgments.

Let us examine the following two judgmental comments, one of which almost self-assuredly gave rationale for the death of EPRP, the other self-consciously labeled names but in the end genuinely accepted the right information. I hope the anonymous commentator will make a sound judgment after reading these commentaries and the articles of call me by my name. Democratic solutions will emerge with real names. Call me by my name!

Comments (1)

Author: Anonymous

I was reading at Debteraw's web that Wolde Tewolde was saying EPRP is alive. I agree with Ato Tedla that 'EPRP is dead. Leave it to rest in peace'. Was that not the reason why the Ethiopians Elected Qeenejit and fight for democracy. Which EPRP are you talking about? EPRP have been divided into two since 1980s. On the other hand, EPRP was made by itself with out the Ethiopian people Election. Now, if EPRP is thinking for the Ethiopians, is this the time to talk about itself? Was it not better to co-operate with others in order to get rid of Woyane! If EPRP knows Woyane very well and Woyane is afraid of EPRP; when is it going to show its power? Wake up? EPRP! Do not repeat some more mistakes. The Worlds Politics has been changed a lot. Let us do something for our be loved Ethiopia now! Not later. Do not be staborn like mule!! Have a nice day!!

■ Zenamarqos (from Marqos A's Blog)

As for the comment made by Tedla saying that EPRP is dead, I have assumed that Mr. Tedla is satisfied with the reply given to him by some commentators in call me by my name No IX, posted on April 28, 2007 and in my article of No. X posted on Debteraw website on May 13, 2007.

Anonymous names usually emanate from three sources.

1. Fear of retaliation.
2. Because of a hidden agenda and
3. Out of respect of one's own culture.

Although the previous commentator is anonymous, the questions are not uncommon and must be answered. That I will gladly attempt to answer some of his/her queries, and in the process to reiterate on Ato Tedla's comment. Here are the following ten cardinal questions that I have picked up from his/her comments.

1. "EPRP is dead..." Was that not the reason why the Ethiopians Elected Qeeneejit and fight for democracy?
2. Which EPRP are you talking about?
3. EPRP was made without by itself without the Ethiopian people Election.
4. If EPRP is thinking for the Ethiopians, is it the time to talk about itself?
5. Was it not better to co-operate with others in order to get rid of Woyane!
6. If EPRP knows Woyane very well and Woyane is afraid of EPRP; when is it going to show its power?
7. Do not repeat some more mistakes
8. The Worlds Politics has been changed a lot
9. Do not be stubborn like mule
10. Have a nice day!!

And here are the relevant replies for your concerns. I hope these frequently asked questions should at least give you a glimpse of understanding of **why** EPRP still exists and **how** it operates.

"EPRP is dead..." Was that not the reason why the Ethiopians Elected Qeeneejit and fight for democracy?

The reason why Ethiopians elected Qeeneejit and fought for democracy was not upon the death of EPRP as such. On the contrary, the opposite was true. It was a test for the government whether it will abide by the rule of Election Law. And the government has failed miserably. EPRP is alive unless we have different meaning for death and life. For your information EPRP's slogan and Party Organ is DEMOCRACIA. Check for the publication. It is the only mouthpiece of EPRP. I doubt those who have negative comments about EPRP have never seen let alone read the Publication. And it is also true that many members and supporters did not receive DEMOCRACIA. Many have perished because of this Publication. It was and is the Essence for the Life of EPRP. It is said that whenever an editor of DEMOCRACIA is killed or imprisoned, it is a sure sign that EPRP is dead. But can we kill ideas? I leave the answer for you. I believe this question is twisted. The soft revolution by Qeenjit to topple the regime did not work for the simple reason that there was no common cause, bond or experience (CCBE). As the name suggest it is just coordination and the coordination was out of tune! Call me by my name.

Which EPRP are you talking about?

Since its inception EPRP is one and only one. The Party is made of rocks and not with sands. Starting with its name, EPRP stand for E = E, People = public; Revolution >< Reform; Party = Politics. It is like the A'Abay River and the B'ahri Erythristm that never change while the people, the plants and the animals that live around these places die and transform. Both geopolitical of River and Sea just named after colors of BLUE & RED, which they are not. Call me by my name not by my color. True some members of EPRP have betrayed the Party; some have switched sides not because of cause but because of lack of communication, propaganda machine, lack of confidence resulting in confusion. And currently some attempt to cheat that they still belong to the true original Party of EPRP but only pay lip services. I believe that the most dangerous confusers are not those who betrayed or abandoned the struggle but those who still pretend that they are or belong to the one and only one EPRP.

If you need further information, we should attempt to understand the history of Anja and Bitena. In a nutshell, ANJA was a phenomenon of a faction or split from EPRP leadership. It was based on a choice of a Secretary General whether who would be a powerful and dictatorial or a weak Secretary General with Strong Collective Leadership behind him. I hope by now every Ethiopian or Eritrean has understood the right choice of EPRP's stand on **collective leadership**. The whole concept of EPRP lies in Collective Leadership. The merits and demerits will be debated with Debteraw SSEEGGY!!

The second wave of EPRP's internal problem was what was known as B'TENA. This is a cultural phenomenon. It is still current in our societies. What it means is that "if I am dead, EPRP is dead, if EPRP is alive, I am alive." It is a tautological argument. But EPRP is a voluntary organization; no one forces to join unless one wants to. EPRP is not about nationalism, religion, or ethnic background. It is about ETHIOPIANISM (not to be confused of course with Ehiopiawinet, Ethiopianess etc.). It is about freedom and democracy. It is about the free people since time immemorial. It is not about slavery and freedom. It is about God given freedom to keep it alive. Enslave yourself and then liberate yourself is not the EPRP's way. I believe those who were involved in the concept of B'Tena have regretted in hindsight and the majority have rejoined the Party. Cutthroat competition is not for Ethiopians. It is not meant for them. EPRP understood its peoples' inner culture for Ethiopian societies are based on community of equals.

The AB story, that is, of **ANJA & B'TENA** was internal and twenty years have passed since EPRP has moved to ABC...Cooperation with all its ex-members as well as with its trustworthy opponents. Finally, let me say that the Oak Tree of EPRP is one but with many branches. Call me by my name. What is my name?

EPRP was made without by itself without the Ethiopian people Election.

EPRP of course was and is organized without the election. It is the whole purpose of why it is still struggling. EPRP believes deeply in Election process and not in Appointment Process. If we miss this concept, we are missing the whole survival of Ethiopia. EPRP says "NONE" to the question 'what is in there for me?' or 'blood is thicker than water'.

It only stands for Principle of Justice for ALL ETHIOPIANS. If we see argument or complaints, it is only a way of doing business with EPRP Community.

EPRP was made without by itself without the Ethiopian people Election.

EPRP does care for all Ethiopians as individuals, as families and as communities. At this time, EPRP is not talking about itself or its members. It is voicing daily about the fate of all Ethiopians and Eritreans as human being as they deserve a better respect and dignity. When EPRP members were young and bold, they did not know what they were doing, now they have matured and believe me they know what they are doing. They are doing, at least the right thing for Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Was it not better to co-operate with others in order to get rid of Woyane!

EPRP has cooperated with all organizations, groups, parties or movements. The history of EPRP is a history of cooperation. Practically, every individual or organization has taken advantages from EPRP's cooperation. EPRP did not consider cooperation as weakness but strength. But cooperation does not mean to surrender one's core value beliefs. EPRP did not and will not cooperate with any thing that it considers it anti-DEMOCRACIA. EPRP's motto has been always "you can use us without abusing us"!!!!

If EPRP knows Woyane! very well and Woyane! Is afraid of EPRP; when is it going to show its power?

EPRP does not consider Woyane as its own personal enemy per se. EPRP considers Woyane's deeds and mission as contrary to the wishes of all Ethiopians. If you are asking that Woyane fears EPRP, it is because EPRP holds the moral Truth, and the truth hurts as they say. Maybe the question of fear comes to mind. Otherwise the street talk of Woyane is fearful of EPRP does not hold water. Nevertheless, it is a common knowledge that Woyane has /is been against the interests of all Ethiopians whether out of fear for EPRP or out of ignorance or something else, no one can tell. The Woyane has a history of revenge first against the Amharas, then against EPRP, then against OLF and then against the Eritreans, and then against Qeeneejit and now against Somalis and tomorrow who knows against who they are after. Only Mariam Tsion of Axum knows!!! EPRP and Woyane do not see eye to eye for Woyane moves with Fear whereas EPRP in Faith or courage.

Do not repeat some more mistakes

What mistakes are you talking about? If you do not make mistakes, you cannot progress. By the way, mistakes, errors, wrongs and damages are synonymous in Amharic. No one is perfect. Only Jesus Christ was perfect, and for that he was crucified. Sometimes, I wonder maybe EPRP leaders like those of Debu, Debesai, Walle, Tselote etc., etc. were perfect to be sacrificed. Memories and pictures do matter. Are we are talking about simple mistakes? What about the bad memories imposed on them? What about the lost pictures of their families? Whose mistake is it to be raped, disposed, and imprisoned and to be refugee and asylee? Please put the blame where it belongs. EPRP is the victim in the so-called Ethiopian Revolution. Please, tell me the specific mistakes committed by EPRP apart from the common street talk of "they are responsible to cause the revolution". Oppression and exploitation were rampant in Ethiopia, the O representing Oromia and the E representing Eritrea. All what EPRP did was to guide through the right

path and you are the witness now what was at stake and still at stake. **What:** Freedom and Justice. **How:** Via DEMOCRACIA. For these slogans EPRP suffered and is still suffering. What is my name calling me by my name? Don't forget though that there were and still are some destructive EPRP members!

The Worlds Politics has been changed a lot

Yes, the World has changed. Changed into what? First, there were Humans (ARTS) in Africa, and then it was transformed into Science while in Europe and later Science yielded to Technology in America, becoming as AST. So now where are we going? Back to Human ARTS or to the STARS. The only solid change we see is that communication has changed. Instead of our verbal or written word, we have switched to the E word. That is about it. In our case, the verbal and visual are still alive and well. But thanks to Woyane, we have abused the word of TRUST in God, in Human and in Societal Harmony. It is good to remember that EPRP is not the one, which has brought havoc through revolution! (Remember the Eway Revolution has been stolen or distorted first by the DERG and now by the TPLF.) The damage is long overdue. The more you change, the more you don't change.

Do not be stubborn like mule

Principles do not change. The flow of Abay River does not change, the sun rising in the East does not change even the Ethiopian skin will not change!! Politics of EPRP should change. But currently, EPRP is not in the business of politicking. If politics is a Relationship, then the current Relationship of EPRP is sour. It is a human survival. Politics of government for Election has not started in Ethiopia. Politics of Appointment is still in operative. The lineage of Minilik and Yohannes still lingers on. But EPRP has gone a long step away from these two lineages towards that of Tewodros of Gondar, Haile Sellassie of Harar and Iyasu of Wello. Changes come with understanding of the other party. Let us try to understand EPRP. Give it a try to forgive EPRP. May be it is holding a panacea for all Ethiopians.

Have a nice day!!

Have a nice day. What a wonderful wish. Thank you very much. We need more of it. Thank you Ethiopian Mothers, Daughters and Sisters (MDS) of EPRP Community and Eritrean Fathers, Sons and Brothers (FSB). Ride on EPRP.

Comment (2)

Author: Beza Alem

U said "call me by name". **Wow!** By which one? By zereгна? By Leir or Wushetam? By Gondare? By Amara? By Gatewote or Morale bis? You can name it you have many many names these days. You did not specific by which name you want to be called? For me I would like to call EPRP by older days name by the name of true Ethiopians not by this days name of you so. You have to be specific about you name or tell as if there is something you did correction by admitting this all mistakes of you "EPRP". It does not help you just call me by my name at all!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! You should admit and return to the right EPRP.

Tewelde: Hi

Thank you very much for commenting on my article of May 13, 2007. I have already told you my name, which is Wolde Tewelde. It may sound funny especially for African American. But hey my parents gave it and I have to live by it. My other pen name is Obo Arada Shawl. I created this name simply to tell people that I am also from the urban areas of Addis, Asmara and Dire Dawa or rural Oromia. That is as far as my personal name. So you have two choices to address me.

But the title of the article is related to Tsegeye, Ssegeye, or using any Latin letter. The first reason was that foreigners couldn't say the Geez SSSSSS. Try this with your children, if you have any. It won't work. The second reason is that there are prominent names similar to this Tsegeye. People get confused. In conformity to your wish, I want to clear with names first. The third reason is that there is a saying in Tigrigna, which says "Shim Yimrh, Tuwaf Yebrh", roughly name guides, candle lights. Also in Amharic, "Melke T'fu B'Melk Y'degfu". But the most important part of these series of articles is to know about Tsegeye Gebre Medhin also known as DEBTERAW. He is living incommunicado somewhere in Tigrai. He is one of the best leaders of EPRP. By the way, I like your name, if it is a true name. Do you live by your name? Can I call you by your name?

Beza:

Thank U for your clarification and great information. It is good to hear from the right fit of EPRP these days. Your good name OBO or the other one or EPRP should replace the other names. You are well oriented about EPRP that is why you have still have a burden for EPRP name. As you told me EPRP is not like as I heard these days. I have a Friend I do like politics. I like to read poems on debteraw that is why I found yours.

My name is real "beza".

Thank you.

Here is what a youth from E'HAWELI (youth of EPRP) sent me as a text message:

"Debterawes are contraries. It's natural what happens when you are born free and male in Ethiopia. You grow up questioning authority and challenging conventional wisdom. It's both a mode of survival and a disease. We have it bad. I'm addicted to argument."

Concluding Remarks

Now that we have named names, pointed fingers at each other, label labeling, it is time to debate with Debteraw about issues and ideas concerning SEEDS (Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia). But let us do first things first. Let us deal first with Ethiopian politics. We have done some background talk on political, social and Revolutionary issues and ideas that brought us here in the first place. Liberty and justice are separated in Ethiopia and Eritrea. The Past is not revisited and the present is not assessed correctly. In such a situation, there is hardly any useful purpose to debate let alone to discover life. And so it is useful to link liberty with justice and to revisit the past and to assess the present. Until next time, call me by my name: a debate with Debteraw will continue. I really appreciate for your comments and questions.

Postscript

“ All men are created equal” and that government should be “of the people by the people and for the people” that there should be “liberty and justice for all”, said Abraham Lincoln. “All” mean all the inhabitants of our planet. EPRP’s planet was beyond Eritrea and Somalia.

Ex-EPRP members should speak of character built, friendships made and comrades lost. But instead they are speaking of background ethnicity, money made, titles earned. A nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces, but also by the men it honors, the women it remembers. The Millennium to be soon celebrated is not meant for celebration, it is supposed to be REMEMBERED. Remembering the thousands of men and women who lost their lives for freedom of political history, cultural art, and life.

This is a thought not a sermon!

EOE.

For comments and critics

Email: woldetewolde@yahoo.com