

Yekatit 12 : Remembrance Day of Fascist Aggression of Ethiopia (1937 to 2019)

By - Berhane Tadese – Engineer

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At 1:30 PM, On Sunday, February 17, 2019 Ethiopian community in metropolitan NYC area - gathered to honor and pay tribute “The Addis Ababa massacre” by Italian Fascist armies. The Addis Ababa Massacre took place on Yekatit 12, 1929 (Ethiopian calendar). They also paid tribute to the Ethiopians heroes who sacrificed their lives for the sovereignty of Ethiopia. It is annually remembered events that held at home and abroad and brought Ethiopians together and raise awareness of our history. Knowledge of history is one of the ingredients that shape our identity and restore the national pride.

The Remembrance Day was organized by Ethiopian Community Mutual Assistancess Association with partnering with Global Alliance for Justice -for Ethiopia cause. The program started with minutes of silence prayer to tribute to those massacred and who lost their lives fighting for our country, followed by several inspired feature Speakers. Speakers Include: Dr. Teshale Tibebe is a professor in the History Department at Temple University, Philadelphia, PA. Dr. Shimelis Bonsea is a Professor in the History Department at Stony Brook University. New York. Dr. Girma Abebe a former United Nation diplomat a graduate of New York University, in New York, New York. Dr. Zergabachew Asfaw is founding member and president of Hakim Workineh and Melaku Beyan society of physicians in North America, graduated from Addis Ababa University Faculty of Medicine and M r. Nicola Antonio DeMarco, JD a Human Rights activist in New York. Mr. DeMarco graduated in law from The Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law in New York, New York.

The programs include a special film clip about war crimes during 1935 Italian invasion, an inspiring patriotic poem from Poet Laureate Tsegaye Gebre Medhin poem collection, and power point slideshow commemorative hero photographs of the time. The organizers made all possible efforts to make sure we honor our victims and the patriots by making this event the best it can be 2019 Remembrance Day.

What is the significance of Remembrance Day? It is a national event to pay tribute for the infamous Addis Ababa Massacre of Yekatit 12, 1929, and to ensure that our brave forefathers who have sacrificed themselves to protect the sovereignty of our country are not forgotten. It is a special day to express our patriotic feeling aganist the Italian Fascist aggression. Also, it gives us the sense of belonging to our motherland, to reflect more deeply on the history of Ethiopia and to pass important heroic stories to the next generation of Ethiopians. It is also a day to say “Thank You very much” for setting us free from yoke of the Italians invaders.

Why and how did it all happen? Several books/articles are written why and how did it all happen by many historians and expatriate scholars. However, to make a quick reference for the wider community Wikipedia page provides this. “ The **Abyssinia Crisis** was a [crisis](#) in 1935 originating in what was called the [Walwal](#) incident in the then-ongoing conflict between the [Kingdom of Italy](#) and the [Empire of Ethiopia](#)(then commonly known as "[Abyssinia](#)" in Europe). The [League of Nations](#) ruled against Italy and voted for economic sanctions, but they were not fully applied. Italy ignored the sanctions, quit the League, made special deals with Britain and France and ultimately established control of Ethiopia. The crisis discredited the League and moved Fascist Italy closer to an alliance with [Nazi Germany](#).”

The cause of the aggression is not only the Walwal “crisis”. It was avenged of defeat of Italians known as Battle of Adwa in March 1, 1896. The Italians had military supremacy in airplanes, poison gas and tanks.

They used the WalWal crisis as pretext to invade Ethiopia. The Fascist Italian occupied Ethiopia for five years, and during their occupation, they did brutal aggression by village burning, torturing, detaining, killing etc. to terrorize the population, and to defeat armed resistance that waged by patriotic Ethiopians. Yekatit 12 is the bloodiest killing unleashed against the ordinary citizens in Addis Ababa. They intensified and expanded the colonial cruel repression all over the country. They attempted to exploit religious and ethnic rivalry. . Although the Italian occupation was brief, but they planted the seed of ethnic division. They employed the strategy of divide and rule along ethno-linguistic lines in this multicultural Ethiopia.

Fast forward to the present situation, the reconfiguration of the nine regions along ethno-linguistic line imposed by EPDRF ruling elites is similar to colonial dividing tactics. The EPDRF administrative divisions along ethnic lines has caused ethnic clashes, and thousands dislocated from their homes and killed. It is threatening the existence of Ethiopia as state. In light of this experience, the current Prime Minister need to take some actions to reconfigure administrative divisions to minimize and possibly avoid ethnic conflicts.

Remembrance Day is a springboard for an African victory against European colonial power in many part of African countries in 1960. It gives us a sense of pride and gives us opportunity to open dialogue other communities to ensure that history does not repeat itself.

Long live Ethiopia!!