

**Network of Ethiopian Scholars (NES)****Title: Turning Adwa into a Pan-African Struggle Heritage Global Site!****Yekatit 23, 2008 or March 1, 2016****Inspiration**

“After Adowa, Ethiopia became emblematic of African valour and resistance, the bastion of prestige and hope to thousands of Africans who were experiencing the full shock of European conquest, and were beginning to search for an answer to the myth of African inferiority ... To articulate West African nationalist intelligentsia of lawyers, merchants, journalists, doctors and clergymen who had since the turn of the century persistently sought to share political power with the colonial ruler, the role of Ethiopia or Ethiopianism in nationalist thought and politics was great and inspiring ... In separate African churches, Africans did and could protest imperial rule and build articulate leadership to oppose the domineering and discriminating actions of the colonial officials.” Taken from S.K.B. Asante, in his study of Ethiopianism in West Africa,

“Ethiopia has need of no one. She stretches out her hands to God.” (Emperor Menelik, February, 1897).

“There was never a time when united that Ethiopians lost to an enemy; it is non-existent in history.” (Emperor Menilek II, 1909)

“I am a woman. I do not like war. But I would rather die than accepting your deal.” Etige Taitu Bitul, Wife of Menelik II

“The focus on modern Ethiopia by people of African descent started during the age of segregation and colonialism. In an Africa partitioned by European powers at the Congress of Berlin, where no African representatives were present,

independent Ethiopia represented a kingdom and a beacon for idealists who promoted the freedom of Africa and other Blacks around the world. This was emphasized when Ethiopian forces defeated invading Italians at the Battle of Adowa in 1896.”(<http://blackexpat.com/new/magazine/black-in-the-day-afro-american-and-afro-caribbean-expats-in-ethiopia/>)

1. Introduction

Today on March 1, 2016, it will be 120 years of Adwa’s African decisive Victory. In 2015 it was 70s year of the 5th Pan-African Congress and the 60s year of the Bandung Conference. Still very little is known about the rich Africa struggle heritage let alone the need to draw lessons to build a better African future. It is urgent that the constructive and positive heritage of liberation struggles from every part of Africa be studied and resurrected in order to re-educate and wean generations of Africans to know what the struggle heritage entails. The glorious past, particularly of early Africa and resistance to numerous imperial advances, and the stolen legacy should be recovered. The battle of Adwa in 1896 epitomises the successful resistance against colonialism. It has come to be recognized as one of the most significant African liberation struggles that took place during the time of the European Scramble for Africa. The best highway of African liberation is symbolized by the successful resistance of the 1896 Adwa Victory. It lives on providing enduring lessons that all should pay close attention to always.

Internally in Ethiopia, all the varied groups from Oromo resident areas to Eritrea were mobilized and contributed richly to the success of the Adwa victory by all Ethiopians through the depth and breadth of the land.

This was not a victory of the leaders, or one ethnic group. This was a national victory with a wider African and indeed world significance. It was and remains an exemplary episode in demonstrating what a united people can achieve with the support of the African Diaspora and the anti-colonialists in the Global South and even in Italy and the rest of Europe too! Adwa Victory was a major anti-colonialist battle fought by all Ethiopians, under the skillful leadership of Emperor Menelik and Empress Taitu. This victory resonated well beyond the Ethiopian and indeed the African border. It represented the clash between colonialism and liberation on a world-scale. Every year during ‘Yekatit’ (February) or March Adwa can provide the occasion to appreciate fully the international significance of the Ethiopian victory over the world colonial project in Africa. The failure to put this victory in the context of the wider challenges which confronted Africa before, during and after the nineteenth century needs to be put right. Adwa Victory highlighted the Ethiopianism’s anti-imperial-colonial project significance convincingly. It is a matter of historical record that the

Adwa victory signaled the beginning of the end of the Scramble for Africa. This victory constitutes a crucial chapter in the record of African resistance and liberation. It armed generations of Africans with the confidence of victory to engage in resistance and liberation. It attracted attention as far as the Caribbean and the Americas, not to mention Europe and the rest of Africa. Adwa victory reversed the imperial-colonial project's design to populate Africa with Europeans like they did with America. It deserves to be celebrated both as a significant episode in its own right and as a memory serving well the emerging communities of resistances in the African world never again to surrender to neo-colonial tyranny for the present time. The battle of Adwa is not just a memory of the past. It continues to live on in the eternal river of time as the best expression of Ethiopianism for resisting effectively the world imperial-colonial project.

This event which took place 120 years ago by a relatively small and weak country, against Italy- with also support from all the imperial powers that tore to pieces Africa at the Scramble for Africa in Berlin in 1885- which was also in it becoming lately a formidable, highly armed and ambitious new colonial power is still relevant today. It is united and not divided Ethiopians that brought the victory to a full realization. It is the strategic thinking of the leadership that made a big difference. The support of the African Diaspora, and anti-colonial forces across the world was inspirational.

2. Adwa Victory Promoted Ethiopianism on a World-Scale

1872-1928 period is called “ the classical period of Ethiopianism because it was at this time that it exercised its greatest political influence and was most widely noticed in the European, American and African press”(Shepperson, G., Ethiopianism past and Present in C. Baeta(ed.) Christianity in Tropical Africa, Oxford University Press,1968.p.250).

By the early 20th Century Ethiopianism emerged among African anti-colonial activists as a subtle method of challenging colonial rule by combining Christian and secular nationalist traditions to promote the idea of African capacity for organization-building without European tutelage. ”

Although Ethiopianism originated as a religious movement, it was significant in establishing the demand for the emancipation of the peoples of African descent inside and outside Africa. Ethiopianism asserted that African history, civilisation and culture are sources of pride and fountainhead of European culture. After discussion

with those who formed the Ethiopian church "on the wider meaning of the designation Ethiopia, all agreed that according to the propesies it literally refers to all non-European people."(Glenda Kruss, Thesis, 1985).Ethiopianism involved an awareness of the history and vaues of African culture. African history and culture became a source of pride with emphases laid on glorious African kings and empires and on the widely held belief that African culture and civilisation had been the fountainhead of European culture(Glenda Kruss).The political aspiration of the Ethiopian leadership saw the ideal chance for its own ascent in the eviction of the European and removal of slavery from the African continent."(Glenda Kruss)

2. The 1829 Ethiopian Manifesto

The Ethiopian Manifesto (1829) was written by Robert Alexander Young, a slave preacher, in defence of Black man's rights in the scale of universal freedom. In the Ethiopian Manifesto (1829), Young addresses both Black and White people. Young identifies African diaspora as Ethiopians. He tells Ethiopians they only enjoy a few of their birth rights because some are enslaved.

He writes to Ethiopians and all slaves in hopes of making them aware of how mistreated they have been. Young questions how his skin colour plays a part in making him eligible for God's gift. Why is the case that white skin is considered more eligible to receive God's gift. He asks for freedom for everyone because it is given to everyone by God and not by mortal men.

When he addresses white men, he accuses them of denying slaves their rights, and lets them know regardless of their mortal riches and social standing, under the eyes of God, they'll pay for their actions in heaven. He identifies himself as being descended from Africa, and says there is a connection between all black people from all parts of the world. He says black women, men, and children have the same heritage because of Psalm 68:31 which goes on to say princes come out from Egypt and Ethiopia will soon stretch its hands to God.

4. The 1896 Ethiopian Manifesto

Ethiopianism has been described as a religion from a Manifesto of September 1896, 5 months after the decisive Adwa Great African Victory.

The Ethiopian Manifesto calls for all Africans across the globe

-To unite together Christians of the African race and various denominations in the name of Jesus Christ to solemnly work towards and pray for the day when Africa people shall become an African Christian nation.

-To demand by Christian and lawful methods the equal recognition of the African and allied peoples the rights and privileges accorded to Europeans and to place on record the great wrongs inflicted upon the African by the racist people and Governments of Europe and America and to urge upon the Christians who wish to be clear of African blood on the day of God's judgment to make restitution

-To pursue steadily and unswervingly the policy Africa for Africans and look for and hasten by prayer and united effort the forming of the African Christian nation by God's power and in his own time and way.

Ethiopians, in the face of their inequality even after they had appropriated Western religious and cultural forms- Christianity and civilisation-were protesting their exclusion on all levels, and without any loss of time that Africans must assert confidently they could be equal to Europeans.

-The African leadership reacted to the erosion of African political power, its economic well-being and its social stability by establishing independent bodies exclusively for Africans

- Ethiopianism is for Africa is for Africans, Africans are for humanity and Humanity is for God!

5. Enduring Lessons from the Great Adwa African Victory

The Adwa victory provided practical expression to Ethiopianism: self-worth, dignity, unity, resistance, confidence, self-reliance and freedom from colonialism. Africans unite as humans, not give in to the tribal divide and rule tactics colonialists left behind which still persists as vile ethnicism. Adwa Victory changed the relationship between Ethiopia and Europe. It is remarkable that from 1896-1906, Pan-African intellectuals like the Haitian, Benito Sylvain visited Ethiopia 4 times. During the 1903-1904- the Cuban-American descent, William H. Ellis visited Ethiopia twice with plans for Ethiopian economic development and the resettlement of African – Americans. Marcus Garvey immortalised Ethiopia by incorporating the spirit of resistance of Adwa in his National Black Anthem. In 1904 Haiti's 100th Centenary Independence was celebrated in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia an honored guard of Ethiopians volunteered and they fired several rifle rounds and their slogan: Long

Live Haiti! Long live the Ethiopia of America, Benito Sylvain got the permission from Emperor Menelik for the celebration and he represented both Ethiopia and Haiti in the 1900 Pan-African Congress and Emperor Menelik after 1896 was appointed as honorary president of the Pan-African Association.

As the spiritual values of Ethiopianism laid the foundation for pan-Africanism to unite all Africans to fight colonialism and apartheid, the same values that Ethiopianism as pan-Africanism has been founded with self-worth dignity, pride, self-worth, agency and freedom are needed also to realize the African renaissance today by enabling Africa to emerge as an independent, strong and proud leader rather than mere follower of former colonial powers in the 21st century. We must all join together and promote that Adwa Victory has to continue by learning through Adwa Victory to remove division and realize fully the benefits of unity. The Adwa Victory must continue highlighting Ethiopianism for Africa, the Global South and oppressed in the world.

All Ethiopians who are currently living in what is known as Ethiopia must appreciate they are privileged to be associated with Ethiopia. They all must know Ethiopia is more than the country it is now. They must cherish the honour of being Ethiopians forever. The least they can do is unite and learn the culture of dialogue to make Ethiopia live ever in the eternal river of time.

6. Commemoration by Making 120 Years of Adwa Victory Special by Erecting Lasting Heritages

It is not acceptable that the great and historic Adwa African Victory that the European powers that united for three months to split Africa into pieces that still affects Africa's agency described as a "**foul crime**" is not celebrated as it should be in Adwa where the battle took place. When they denounced the Great Africa Victory as "a **foul crime**", there should have been serious effort to educate and wean generations by creating in Adwa, Tigray province, a great historic heritage site. That has not been done. It is never late to do it now and make a mark at the current 120 years moment on March 1, 2016. Let us call for all Africans to unite and establish a great Pan-African Adwa Victory heritage site at this time on the 120 years anniversary day on March 1, 2016 or Yekatit 23, 2008.

The Adwa Africa Victory should have been recognised as a UNESCO world Heritage struggle resources for generations to value and keep learning and knowing about this African struggle victory heritage

There should have been Pan-African education to promote the African Struggle Heritage Adwa Victory represented by establishing a special university. This should have been established at least at the centennial period when Adwa African victory was commemorated. Let all cooperate to establish it and mark 120 years as a distinguished time for remembering the great Adwa African Victory by establishing in Adwa a Pan-African Adwa Victory inspired university open to all in the Global South and the rest of the world for those who wish to work for the unity of all humanity by learning Pan-Africanism for completing African liberation.

Let there be statues also erected in Adwa of all the key leaders and let there be a museum detailing how the battle was won decisively. There should be all the records, remembering the way the strategy was designed to create a decisive victory including the key quotes from the leaders by establishing a historic site for an ADWA AFRICAN VICTORY. This will make Adwa to become a learning site for all in the world to visit like Axum, Labella, Gondar and other historic places.

There should be special library both physical and digital in Adwa to record and show all the African struggle histories, not just Adwa's alone, but inspired by the Great Adwa African victory. Let Adwa inspire all the struggles that we should all remember enabling the Africana world never to surrender to any form of injustice ever again.

We ask the African Union and all the African Governments from Ethiopia to all the AU member states including the Ethiopian-African Diasporas, and all from the Global South to be actively involved and contribute without fail to highlight the 120 Years of the Great African Victory. This can be done by the African Union taking the decision by making March 1 every year a Special Day for the Great African Adwa Victory and urge African states to make the month an educational Month for African unity and Renaissance by learning from Africa's great struggles heritage to advance the African unity and renaissance agency project identity to be fully promoted and realised before 2063! Let all learn how to combine Ethiopianism with Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance with the struggle heritage of the Great Adwa African Victory Spirit.

Finally, we ourselves have decided to do a contribution with my children to create a special Adwa Victory song and edit a book together. Nothing is more important than getting the younger generation to be involved. We are hoping all who are able will contribute. We already have full paper contributions from Professor Habte Cherunet, a truly excellent and well researched paper, Ato Kidane Alemayehu, and a number of other contributors.

I was able to give a keynote in Adwa Great African Victory: Relevance for the Global South at Jawaharlal Nehru University, in New Delhi in India. (<https://www.facebook.com/AssociationOfAfricanStudentsInIndia>)

Let us together build memorable heritage. Let us continue to do so all Africans can create the ability together to deal with and respond to challenges by united voice, rather than making 54 noises that can easily get ignored, and make action to realise African solutions to African problems by relying on and using Africa's spiritual, knowledge and struggles Heritages,

Finally: The World fears time. Time fears history and History fears Ethiopia. Why? Ethiopia did not provide material help to the oppressed people of the world, it was able to provide spiritual public good (SPG) to the world by her sheer presence resisting successfully all forms of colonial aggressions. This makes Ethiopia go beyond becoming a mere nation; Ethiopia is a civilization, history and humanity combined. It is not just history. It is not just civilization. It is not just philosophy. It is not just humanity. It is a great synthesis of all of them. It gave spirituality- Africa for Africans, Africans for humanity and humanity for God. It is a great inspiration just by sheer sense of its very being becoming recognized as the provider of liberation resources to all humanity in the world. Ethiopianism explains philosophically her historical presence as evidence providing so much spiritual strength, confidence, independence self-worth and freedom to those who were denied their humanity and their right to worship God as Christians. Ethiopianism remains relevant now also to continue the spiritual inspiration to all the oppressed that continue to suffer from a world that is driven by ideas that are ontologically shallow and epistemologically dry. What Makes the Great Adwa African Victory unique is it reinforced this Ethiopianism across the world.

Let Ethiopia continue to provide this powerful spiritual food to the world as long as those in Ethiopia who currently live in it can learn to protect this treasure forever by preferring a dialogue culture to any other form of resolving any type of conflict that Ethiopia may go through from now on. Let us all unite to agree that we treasure Ethiopia to live on in the eternal river of time continuing to provide spiritual public good forever.

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