

OPPOSTION CONFERENCE AND OUR EXPECTATION

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ORIGIN OF THE ERITREAN PEOPLE

While the original inhabitants of Eritrea belonged to the Negroid race, it's proximity to the Red Sea and Asiatic mainland's has resulted in inflow of waves of Cushitic {Hamitic} and Semitic migration groups from Nile valley and Arabian peninsula. The Cushitic groups entered Eritrea from Nile valley area while the Semitic groups are the last additions.

The subsequent intermixing of the Negroid, Cushitic and Semitic groups culminated in the formation of the nine ethnic groups living in Eritrea today. Even though none of these groups can be considered as pure descendents of the original three racial-lingual groups, they can be classified as such based on their predominant cultural and biological characteristics. Overall the Semitic stock consisting of the Tigrigna, Tigre and Rashaida represent about 70-80% of the population today. The Cushitic stock consists of the Beni-Amer { Hedarib}, Bilen, the Saho and Afar which together constitute almost 15% of the Eritrean population. The descendents of the indigenous Negroid group are the Kunama and Nara which constitute the smallest proportion of the Eritrean population. All of these ethnic groups with the exception of the Rashaida are known to have lived in their present day abodes since atleast the 16th century.

The Turkish Ottoman Empire, the Egyptians and the Italians were the invaders of the land called Eritrea today, In about 1890 the Italians gave Eritrea it name and since then the Eritrean entity and identity has been solid and no history in the existence of Eritrea tells us that any ethnic group or nationality attempted to secede from this Eritrean entity or identity. It is on these bases that I fully agree with Alemseged Tesfai the historian theoretician of DICTATORIAL PFDJ who originated the HADE LIBI HADE HIZBI. Eritreans stick to their identity and entity. We see and read some politicians and writers poke fan on the phrase HADA LIBI HADA HIZIBI with out trying to analyze what it conveys.

In teaching the above democratic ideals, some Eritrean politicians and journalists don't seem to acknowledge that the democratic ideals should respect the Eritrean identity and Eritrean entity. Our Eritrean identity is based in our racial make up, linguistic domain and religious affiliation---etc. Eritrean national entity defines Eritreans as belong to one and only one set mind of existence. The factors which constitute national entity are race, language, geography, political institutions, and economic activities---etc.

Yes there is Economic disparity between highland and lowland Eritrea. We see education disparity in the Eritrean nationalities and nations. We also know that Eritrea was being invaded or colonized up to 1991 since its existence. From 1991 to this day Eritreans are struggling to bring dictatorship to its knees. To put the blame for the disparity to one ethnic group or nationality or nation is to deny the centuries of Eritrea political rights deprivation and human rights deprivation. Having this in mind let us join the upcoming opposition conference to lay ground work to rectify the century's abuse of the people of Eritrea.

WATER SHADES OF ERITREAN EXISTANCE

Three major water-shed historical eras occurred in our historic struggle since the Eritrean entity was clinched in the nineteenth century.

- The heroic struggle of our fathers and mothers for the independence of Eritrea which ended up in federal yoke.
- Our historic armed struggle that enabled us to snatch our independence.
- The presented day struggle for democratic and human rights, for national liberation and economic development.

Today Eritreans have the task of liberation which voluntarily and enthusiastically has chosen to undertake. Eritrean revolutionaries have the obligation to erect stable Eritrea by putting an end to the grip of the dictatorial regime. The eventual goal is to turn to political, social and economic reconstruction to make it the pre occupation of all Eritreans, where we can create growth and development, so that injustice vanish and just distribution of resources and power prevail and people will employ in fruitful production.

Even in peaceful and stable Eritrea people will differ in their political, social and economic approach. People differ in their approach in accordance to their need and aspirations. That is why Eritreans are trying to get rid of dictatorship and establish multi-party democracy. Some people confuse the contemporary political stage we are at in the opposition camp with full fledged political system establishment. In many political gatherings and seminars we see and hear some people saying “we form committees representing the people. The leaders of political organizations must be accountable to the Eritrean people”. We say this is like putting the cart before the horse. We are not there yet. Political organization leaders are accountable to their political program; united front leaders are accountable to their charter. We are at the era of revolutionary struggle where organization members serve their political program and the mass follow the one which they think will serve their interest. This is the era where political organizations may contemplate transition to political parties, form alliances, united fronts etc. It is crucial that all revolutionary organizations unit on minimum

national program which enables us transition to provisional national government. That is why we call upon all democratic elements organizations and civil societies to attend the upcoming conference.

Fellow Eritreans should be aware and attentive to distinguish rhetoric from unity for plan of action. Rhetoric is defined as “the art of expression and the persuasive use of language may be insincere or pretentious so as to influence or persuade others.” Rhetoric appeals to emotions rather than reason. Rhetoric duels on creative speeches rather than documentation and records of achievement.

THE SCOURGE OF DICTATORSHIP:

- Enslave Eritreans in the name of national service and defense of the mother- land.
- Massacres people.
- Herd Eritreans in prisons of unknown locations.
- Open accounts and invests in places like China while Eritrea is deprived of hard currency.
- Practice corruption and bribery in governance.
- Dived and rule.
- Cause human suffering of mal-nutrition, hunger, illness, and ignorance.
- Cause economic destruction by governing the country with no economic plan.
- Cause severe bodily and mental pains on the people who govern.
- Creates flood of refugees.
- Reins on one-party dictatorship the negation of our armed struggle and the Oath of independence.

In the last few years since independence of our beloved Eritrea, the objective and subjective conditions had ripened making it possible to firmly and irrevocably root out the dictatorial regime in our country, and to create a genuine, revolutionary political parties and civic societies spread to every corner of Eritrea, intensifying the mass struggles for democratic and human rights and national liberation.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THE JULY CONFERENCE

Far sighted vision of the following crucial issues is expected of the conference:

- Upgrading the EDA charter and organize the EDA to assume the task of vanguard.
- Why and how democracy in Eritrea.
- Centralized administration versus decentralized administration in Eritrea. Federalism or Unitary type of administration. Official languages and the political right of nationalities.
- The army of the opposition versus the national army
- The issue of refugees.
- Economic policy and foreign policy.
- Land ownership and land reform.
- The road to reconciliation.
- The fate of the dictatorial regime's leaders and the so- called military generals.
- Unity in diversity. How?
- The boarder issue with our neighbors.
- Political prisoners- general amnesty or what?
- The economic and cultural gap.
- Education and the issue of languages.

PARTICIPANTS. Participants should include representatives of all Opposition political organizations, movements, civic societies who don't have political affiliation or relationship with the dictatorial regime. Religious organizations,

professionals and prominent individuals should be encouraged to participate. International observers can be helpful to assure the conferences process and results. A form should be drafted and posted in the web-sites so us participants could fill the forms and send it to the organizing body instead of selective invitation.

Participants come from far away countries, continents, thus they need ample time to arrange their leave of absence from work and check their budget for travel. The EAIM would like to participate in the upcoming conference, present paper on one or two issues from the above. We would like to hear from the organizing committee as soon as possible either endorsing or rejecting the suggestion.

SHORT TERM TASK POST CONFERENCE

Once the question of vanguard is solidified, the immediate task now is to get rid of dictatorship. The evils of dictatorship are the daily dose of the Eritrean public. The condition for change is ripe. The question is how? The EDA prefers to apply all means of struggle. EAIM suggests armed resistance is the logical form of struggle in the Eritrean reality. Taking up arms is not an easy decision to make. War is destructive, and should always be the last option in the consideration of the Eritrean opposition. However, all efforts for peaceful democratic change in our country had so far proved futile. Some, say “violence be gets violence”. We don’t know how they arrived at such fallacious rhetoric. We know that “theory be get

theory” is sound scientific fact. We politely ask them to prove it or correct it, because we care when the Eritrean public is misinformed.

It has become apparent that only taking up arms could anyone wishing out an end to the dictatorship and the violation of our peoples’ fundamental rights hope to succeed. The regime has amassed a huge coercive state machinery using violence to oppress the people. The taking up of arms against the regime is therefore considered not just right, but a patriotic and national obligation.

Right after the conference leadership should tighten its belt and start to take advantage of the UNSC 1907 resolution and move politically and militarily to get rid of dictatorship. The first thing they should do in our opinion is to move the head quarter of the organization from Addis Ababa to Adwa or Tenben because unless we act from proximity to our borders our action will not be effective.

Once we get rid of dictatorship a caretaker government or temporary government is often set until stability can be restored. We expect national conference to be held as soon as the provisional government stabilizes the political situation in the country. It can be done within three months.

LONG TERM PROGRAM TO BE DEvised BASED ON THE ABOVE TASK

TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT APPOINTED AT THE NATIONALCONFERENCE

A transitional government is a temporary ruling organization put into place pending the establishment of a permanent democratic government. Transitional government has appointed officials to carry out necessary domestic operations until an elected official can replace him/her. Some of the tasks of transitional government are to facilitate conditions so as democratic institution guidelines could be drafted. Constitution is one of the things, expected to be drafted at this stage.

CONSTITUTION

During the past century, constitutions have be come an important hallmark of statehood and sovereignty through out the world. Eritrea had an imposed provisional constitution crafted by the UN from 1952-1961. In 1993 the EPDJ regime organized hand picked, constitution

drafting committee which came up with EPLF political program as Eritrea's drafted constitution.

We say our constitution should be mindful of Eritrea's history so as to reflect Eritrea's reality and a vision for the foreseeable future. We have to be able to envision a system of government beyond our own participation. In drafting our upcoming constitution, all Eritrean nationalities, religious organizations, legal political organizations should be represented. Besides, constitution scholars should be encouraged to participate. These days, documents for reference and consultation are abundant and easy to get.

This is the time political parties are being born and get ready to be legalized and prepare for election.

We struggle we succeed
Glory to our martyrs
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