

The honorable Ato Gebru Asrat and his politics. By Yilma Bekele

The honorable Ato Gebru Asrat has written a very fat book that is five hundred pages long. I am assuming that the purpose of the book was to present himself as a person of vision and to show us his leadership ability to show us the road to the future. Unfortunately, he has a handicap that cannot be glossed over since for many years he has operated as member of that infamous organization TPLF (አዝባዊ ወያኔ ሓርነት ትግራይ) that is still creating havoc in the life of our people and our country. It is a tough challenge for anyone to try to explain or to find justification for a party that is viewed by a vast majority of Ethiopians in a negative light. I doubt anyone envies the individuals dilemma.

There are plenty of reasons people write a book about an experience they have gone through. It could be to teach others from both the positive and the negative aspects of the experience and/or to help them achieve a goal or avoid pitfalls. Some write to explain themselves so that they could avoid being misunderstood or to avert someone else writing about their life. It is usually an attempt to have the final say.

Ato Gebru's book is titled 'Sovereignty and Democracy'. I am not sure why he chose this title. At the moment Ethiopia's sovereignty is not threatened by any outside power known to us and Democracy is one commodity that is in short supply in our country. Ato Gebru, as member of the ruling party, is the one that made it scarce in our ancient land.

He was interviewed by VOA. The Interviewer focused on Ato Gebru's description of the internal criminality of the TPLF organization, his views on the last war with Eritrea, and his prescription to solve the problem which he determines are vital and must be solved. I am assuming such a venerable organization like VOA must have people that go over the book and suggest discussion points on what they think to be the central message in the book.

Out of a five hundred page book they felt that those two points were the central point the author was attempting to make - who am I to disagree with them? That is what I will concentrate on. I am aware VOA's trust and appeal has taken a nose dive since the establishment of ESAT. Their tendency to side with the dictatorial regime, their attempt to distort the news to fit some reporter's bias, and the fact that we really do not need them anymore should be a wake-up call to VOA management to improve their service and ethical standards.

Like all books written by Woyane officials present or past this book is also fiction trying to pass as a serious work. I am sure the Honorable former Woyane politburo member, governor of Tigray Kilil, has a lot of useful inside information to tell us, if he so wishes, yet he chooses to weave a web of imaginary tales, self-serving stories, and deliberately vague memories to lead us to another dead end street. This book was not written not to enlighten us with policies formulated and decisions made while the individual was in position of great power, but it was written with the sole aim of continuing the single ethnic rule at the expense of the rest of us that are left to be observers in our own country.

I have no doubt Ato Gebru is aware of his attempt to revise history that happened yesterday in our presence is not a winning idea nor would it convince anyone of us of the validity of his prejudiced memory. The simple question would be why do it when it is a child's play to refute his faulty analysis. The answer is simple. It is that sickness called delusion, that afflicts those that are used to operate in a totally different dimension. Folks like that are usually surrounded by

people that totally agree with them and who reinforce the false memories and the baseless lies that begin to take a life of its own when told over and over again.

According to our TPLF central committee member and governor of the number one Kilil, there are two issues that are facing our country at the moment. The lack of a sea port and the unsettled issue of Eritrea. It is not the lack of Democracy, the absence of the rule of law, the marginalization of the 94% Ethiopians that are forced to be silent observers in the governance of their nation, the constant abuse of all political organization not affiliated or subservient to TPLF, the hundreds of reporters and newspaper editors that are languishing in Woyane jail. No sir, it is the dreaded Shabia and the Port of Assab that should consume our passion and once we deal with these two issues the sun will rise once again and peace will prevail.

The crazy part about this obsession is that the Honorable Ato Gebru was there sitting around the table while both issues were decided and the argument supposedly settled. The 94% were not asked their opinion. There is no need to dump it on Ato Meles since at that point in time he was just one politburo member among many without extra power or influence. Seyoum Mesfin, Seye Abreha, Sebhat Nega, Arkebe Okubay, Abay Teshaye, Abadi Zemo, Azeb Mesfin, Tsegay Berhe among others were part of the decision making process. This idea of back pedaling is both cheap and a reflection on the ethics of the individual.

Since its inception, the TPLF always had this obsession regarding maps and boundaries both International and National. They were very busy drawing lines, designing flags and creating satellite organization during the many years of their cave life. If you notice, Tigray is the only region that showed a bigger foot print when they were done with their map making effort. Thus a little bit of Gondar that included the fertile Setit Humera was generously taken, and the Wolikait people were ethnic cleansed with new arrival from Tigray. Wollo contracted so much it is a miracle it did not disappear, and Afar was not spared from their sharp pencil. If it was not true, it would be considered comical. Why would anybody do that when the Nation was one whole entity? What is good for Tigray should have been good for all of Ethiopia. TPLF does not think like that. They are incapable of looking at the bigger picture.

The fate of Assab or a sea outlet for Ethiopia was completely made fun of and they were happy to point their fingers and accuse the rest of us as being unduly concerned and imbued with the usual neftegna mentality. Even Herman Cohen the white peace maker was a little puzzled by their dismissal of the need for a port. Today in 2014 I am not playing the game whether Assab is ours or belongs to the Eritreans but any Ethiopian leader worth his salt should have weighed the ramifications of such a decision. There could have been one hundred and one ways to reach an accommodation where the two Nations could fully utilize the port for the benefit of both people. That would require leadership ability and the ability to protect ones interest for future generations to come. TPLF is incapable of such heavy thinking. They have a retail mentality and wholesale concept is alien to the bird brain organization.

Notice that the Honorable Ato Gebru is seriously telling us about a truck full of coffee and some cereal being transported to Eritrea while his party was negotiating about changing the name of our Airlines and appointing Eritreans to the National Bank of Ethiopia. Hello Ato Gebru can we have a little respect here?

When Eritrea achieved its independence in 1992 Woyane leaders were the number one cheerleaders on the podium led by the evil dead tyrant. Ato Gebru and the rest of the politburo members were in accord with this outcome. We did not hear a peep out of them. Woyane upon

settling in Addis had a conflict of interest with Eritreans on how to divide the loot. Their contradiction reached such a high point that the two toothless nations went to war to prove their manhood.

The rest of Ethiopia was dragged into this senseless war. We are told by foreign war specialists over eighty thousand Ethiopians and twenty thousand Eritreans lost their life. Ethiopian soldiers were used as sacrificial lambs to pierce the heavily fortified Eritrean position. The rest of Ethiopia was used to protect Tigray Kilil. Our dead soldiers were left to be eaten by wild animals. Ethiopian mothers and fathers were not even told who died where and were denied to mourn their children by Ato Gebru's TPLF party.

The supposedly ex-Woyane is now telling us that we have to prepare for another war to take over Assab. In his VOA interview he goes further and advocates tearing down the agreement with Eritrea and starting from scratch. As far as this war monger is concerned the Eritreans are expected to lie dead while we march north and take over their country. He actually believes the Eritreans will allow TPLF Woyane to do to their country what they have been doing to Ethiopia the last twenty years. That is not all he even envisions including Somalia that his TPLF army has been committing war crimes as part of his future greater Ethiopia. Coming from a person that created Kilil and tolerated ethnic cleansing (remember Wolkait) to even think of such a scheme is a little radical wouldn't you say? I know some people whose delusional behavior leaves me with an open mouth, but when it comes to Comrade Gebru my brain ceases to function, my heart palpitates, and my knees buckle by the sheer audacity of his madness.

Before we go further lets us deconstruct the life of our esteemed country man. As I said, he was a member of the politburo of that curse of a party (አዝባዊ ወያኔ ሓርነት ትግራይ) and he was the governor of the Tigray Kilil from 1991 to 2001. We were told he was kicked out of the party in the aftermath of the war with Eritrea. The fact that after leaving the organization he was able to lead a life as a high school teacher in his Kilil is not a normal situation for our country. It did not stop there. He was able to form an opposition Party to TPLF and lived to tell about it. This I would like to say is a miracle. From experience, the TPLF is not such a forgiving organization, and anyone that challenges our warlords does not get a chance to live and tell about it unless of course one belongs to the 'golden tribe' as referred to by the dead tyrant.

Kinjilt leaders suffered two years in Kaliti, and upon their humiliating release some were told to leave if they valued their life. Dr. Berhanu was exiled and Weizero Birtukan was given a lesson regarding the wisdom of rising up again, Secretary Andualem Arage is still in Kaliti, and Professor Asrat was murdered. Today we have leading members of Andenet, Semayawi Party and righteous reporters and editors in Kaliti to teach the rest of us a lesson. Ato Gebru formed 'Arena Tigray Party', and today he is a member of the loyal opposition. It does not stop there. Ato Gebru and his comrade in arms Ato Seye Abreha rose to prominence and were able to infiltrate Andenet Party establishing the so called Medrek that gave the elections of 2010 a legitimacy in the eyes of their foreign sponsors. As loyal soldiers, they never stopped serving their good old organization.

I was present in California where Medrek leaders were touring the US. At that time I asked a very simple question, why are these gentlemen wasting our hard earned money that was being used for transportation, hotel and food to campaigning in America among the non-voters while the election was being held in Ethiopia? No one had an answer. The gentlemen Medrek representatives spoke near our city. Their Chairman Weizero Birtukan was in Kaliti and none of them mentioned her by name. The delegation touring in America included Ato Gebru Asrat, Ato

Seye Abreha, Ato Gizachew Shiferaw, Dr. Merera Gudina and Dr. Negaso Gidada. A few Andenet support groups found the whole affair so nauseating that they politely requested for some of the delegates not to be included as guests in their town. Ethiopian drama never know ends.

Today Ato Gebru Asrat's book is being advertised among the Diaspora, and the author have showed up in America to give interviews to sell his fiction. Where do most of the Diaspora and those at home rely to get their news and information in 1014 is a good question. The last three years ESAT has become the premier go to media to be informed, entertained and educated both at home and for those in exile. One would think anyone that wants his book to be read by many would approach ESAT. From what I know he has chosen VOA and the Tigrean speaking radio programs to talk to the rest of us. He is still preaching to his own Kilil.

They have a saying in the English language it goes like this 'the third time is a charm'. It means that to wish and hope that since the previous two attempts failed one would succeed the third time. I really doubt the Honorable gentleman would have such luck. He failed with forming the so called satellite organization called EPDRF. Today all Ethiopians abhor this half baked entity for what it is - enforcer of Woyane rule by proxy. He failed by forming Medrek with the help of a few spineless individuals and disrupt Andenet. Today Andenet is still alive and working hard to regain relevancy. Medrek succeeded in the 2010 election as a Trojan horse of TPLF but ended up exposing the weakness of the leaders for life that are becoming the laughing stock of our people. This third attempt to insistently bring Eritrea into our discussion will not work.

Our problem is the lack of the rule of law and the imposition of single ethnic rule over the rest of us. Dear Ato Gebru when the time comes we will sit like civilized people with whoever governs Eritrea and reach an accommodation on all subjects based on self-interest, international norms and that age old relationship the two people have had and that cannot be wished away by anyone. Unlike the way TPLF has tried to solve this vexing problem, ours way will work because it will be based on rationality, self-restraint and the bigger benefit that would come out of love and respect.

Finally, I see a pattern in this attempt by some to engrain themselves to the victims by pretending to be reasonable and impartial. They see the writing on the wall. Woyane philosophy has reached its apex and it is on the decline. The opposition forces are slowly realigning and focusing on the common enemy. What Woyane wants at the moment is to freeze everything as it is and we all go in a slow incremental fashion to see a new Ethiopia. They are dreaming of reconciliation without justice. That would not work.

The concept of 'truth and reconciliation' has been attempted in many places that went through what we are experiencing today in Ethiopia. We can clearly see where it worked and where it failed. The TPLF is thinking of Rwanda, while we are focused on South Africa. The Rwandan road ended up benefiting the same victimizers and their society is still sitting on an explosive device waiting to ignite. We do not need to duplicate that. We want justice that is lasting. We prefer the South African model but with an eye to making it work in our country.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K79OxTTv4ZU>

<http://ethsat.com/video/esat-yehasab-mengede-10-october-2014/>