

Et tu, ESAT? By Yilma Bekele

'Et, tu Brute?' is what the Roman Emperor Julius Caesar was heard to have said when he saw his dear friend Marcus Brutus in league with his assassins. In English he was saying 'you too, Brutus?' It is said by historians that Caesar was fond of Brutus and treated him as he would a son. His betrayal must have been very painful.

This last week I was forced to utter Et tu three times in one week. Like Caesar was blindsided by the turnabout behavior of his friend I was completely rendered speechless by the action of those I considered dear and close. As an Ethiopian I definitely consider myself beyond surprise when it comes to news and actions of my homeland and people. What country would ever consider robbing abused returning immigrants? In fact I have managed to develop such a thick skin that most things just bounce off barely leaving a scratch. It is not for being uncaring but a simple defense mechanism to survive. I am an Ethiopian and I suffer in silence.

The last month has been very difficult for us Ethiopians like it or not. To witness the cold blooded and ugly behavior of the Saudi Government against our people was a painful experience. Our heart goes to the victims. The shameful act of the so called Ethiopian government was a lesson on what happens when warlords, village idiots and their enablers take over a country. The Woyane mafias were more concerned about offending the Arab billionaires more than the suffering of their citizens.

To make matters worse the pride of all humans in general and Africans in particular Nelson Mandela Died. The world was a sad place. Not many Mandelas come around this way often. Talk about Mandela completely dominated the news. The international media was looking under every nook and cranny to find anything to do with the great leader. No story was deemed irrelevant if it has anything to do with Madiba. The love for Mandela was universal.

I was sucking on Mandela lore when I came across ESAT's presentation. They stopped me on my tracks. That is when like Caesar I said Et tu ESAT? (antem esat?) How could you mix water and oil my friend. Isn't that what they were attempting to do? Asking an ordinary criminal, a murderer to give testimonial about a liberation fighter, a humanist, a leader by the ballot box is bizarre and insults the memory of our Madiba not to mention our poor tossed around Ethiopian existence.

The interviewer referred to criminal Mengistu Hailemariam as the former president of Ethiopia. That is totally not true. The individual was the former dictator of Ethiopia. As far as history tells us we Ethiopians have never freely elected a leader. We had hereditary kings until Emperor Haile Selassie and a successive of dictators since then. What we got today being dictator number two and half. No matter how ever much painful it was I listened to the monologue.

As I suspected it was the usual hot air with no deep analysis but your garden variety personal views presented as verifiable facts. It was déjà vu time if you remember during the hay days of the Derg era where the 'leader' was an expert on every subject. This was chapter two where the dictator became a historian and political scientist and gave us a lesson on the liberation movements, the international situation and the colonial era. He is entitled to his opinion but not his facts but dictators are allergic to facts thus they weave their own theory out of thin air which with the help of the gun they force all to see it their way. He must be starved for attention because one question is all he needed to run away with his rehearsed play of course with himself as the star.

To add insult to injury the criminal was asked for advice regarding the current situation of our precious homeland. This is where I got sick. I felt insulted. I shrank until I disappeared. It is like asking the arsonist about the building he just torched. May the Gods have mercy on our soul?

Thus I took my time and talked to a lot of Ethiopians on the subject of Mengistu. Some were offended like I was, a few dismissed it as a nonevent and there were a few that actually liked it. Mengistu Hailemariam dominated our people and country for a long time. His reign is remembered to be a very traumatic time for our people. He was accidentally thrust into being a leader, a position that he was not prepared or had the aptitude for. There is no need to spell out the many horrifying and cruel acts carried out by his gang which no Ethiopian escaped from.

Today we are harvesting what Mengistu sowed. Millions of relatives of his victims are still with us. There are those that lost a family member, a loved one, a neighbor, a friend whose memory is still fresh and constant reminder of those difficult days. Mengistu is our collective nightmare.

I heard him mention the Emperor and thought how cold blooded he must be talking about the person he murdered presiding as judge, jury and executioner. How callous one has to be. But we knew that. They say he is brave and decisive but he left his army behind and run away. That is the dictionary definition of a coward. He said he hasn't killed a fly but when he was the leader blood flowed like river in the streets of Ethiopia. That is an example of a person on denial. Some claim he was patriotic, loved his country but a generation of educated were sacrificed, high ranking military officers faced the firing squad, and thousands started the exodus which hasn't abated yet. That is what happens when you have a mad person in charge.

This is the individual that ESAT and some other obscure outfits are trying to invite to our living rooms as honorable guests that would contribute positively to the conversation. What valuable lesson could we learn from an individual that has not even come to terms with the crimes he perpetuated and has not even bothered to ask for forgiveness to the people and nation he hurt and bring closure to those that have lost their loved ones? What exactly did he tell us that we don't know?

He said Mandela did not come to Ethiopia because he did not like Woyane's ethnic policy. Wow is all I could say. He was brought out of the deep freeze to tell us what we already know? All this excitement to show that Madiba was not fond of the likes of the nameless warlord? I had no idea that we needed Madiba to tell us how awful Woyanes are. I am sorry ESAT that is yesterday's news. The Ethiopian people have gone beyond that and if it was not for the network of terror cells Woyane has established on every street they would have dealt with the mafia outfit a long time ago.

What else, I am afraid nothing. Not that there could be anything more and no earthly reason to expect to be anything of value. So what is the idea of getting this has been individual to come out and disturb our peace, derail our freedom train and confuse the many young Ethiopians that have not yet made an intelligent determination on what has happened the last forty years.

Maybe I misunderstood. It is possible I am barking up the wrong tree. I always thought of ESAT as different. You know like a weapon of Democracy and freedom. The voice of the voiceless is what I tell people. 'Ethiopia's eyes and ears' is what is said of ESAT. Organ mal function is what my brain screamed. What happened here, and where is the disconnect? What trajectory are we heading? Are we going to be the voice of the least common denominator?

Some would try to argue about freedom of speech. Little knowledge is always dangerous. I am afraid that principle is not applicable here. I would not advocate silencing the fascist thug but at the same time I wouldn't hand him my microphone to disperse his toxic, irrelevant and idiotic idea using my hard earned media. We welcomed ESAT to raise the level of conversation to a higher level. Diaspora Ethiopians that are by no choice of their own displaced from their mother land contribute to ESAT so it could help us inform each other, echo the cry of our people, organize to fight injustice and teach each other to love, respect and help create the future democratic Ethiopia.

Inviting the likes of yesterday abusers is not the way to go. Felling the hurt brought about by Mengistu and Meles is the first order of business. If we don't feel each others pain we are likely to inflict pain on others. If barbaric acts by usurpers and warlords is not condemned and etched in our brain to avoid in the future aren't we condemned to repeat history?

I was feeling sad and dejected when I came across more of the same waiting for me around the corner. It is no other than the Honorable Ato Bulcha Demeksa that made me rush to the pharmacy in search of valium or any drug that would numb my frayed nerve. In an interview on German Radio our elder father was peddling hate filled discourse on the relationship between different ethnic groups in our country. He even went to the extent of describing it as a colonial situation. A very interesting analysis when you consider our elder statesman was Minister during the time of the Emperor and a member of Parliament during Woyane rule.

You would think that age has a mellowing effect and being an elder, an experienced statesman, and a leader would make you choose your words carefully and foresee the consequences of loose speech. With all due respect I am forced to conclude the honorable gentleman made a major mistake. He gave fuel to some erratic, ego driven jihadists the perfect argument to peddle their nihilistic argument for fifteen minutes of fame.

The final straw that was trying to buckle my back was the interview with Tamrat Layne an idiot that always requires a crutch to stand up straight. Yesterday he was a Marxist that supposedly fought to get rid of military rule and build dictatorship of the proletariat. In fact he was so gung ho about it he went to the bush and raised a gun to build his new society. Upon winning he was crowned Prime Minister and sent out to disparage his own ethnic group and incite war against unarmed peasants. Needless to say when his usefulness was exhausted he made to confess to financial crimes and thrown in the dungeon.

This criminal whose hand is soiled by the blood of our family members is now living among us as a Christian preacher. Hi current crutch is no other than the holy Bible and I am afraid he is deeply immersed until the next phase of his transformation. Who knows tomorrow he might pick crack cocaine to lean on to support his weak underdeveloped brain. But no matter he was interviewed as a newsmaker to tell us on how to conduct our struggle against his former friends. It is not him I am worried about but my poor country and people that are jumping from one criminal to another to lead us on the road of failure.

Et tu ESAT, Et tu Bulcha is what is keeping me awake at night. May be I need new friends that would not play with my fragile ego and show a little bit of respect and empathy. As for Tamrat I

await for his next interview and hopefully he would show up as a Drag Queen complete with makeup and that I promise would put my world right side up.