

Call me by my Title: opposition without proposition

The role model of 4 Ethiopian Professors (AMMM)

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Introduction

Political opposition is a healthy condition. Even better would be a political proposition as it enhances problem solving mechanisms. Four Professors have been impacting subtle views on college students, bureaucrats and among intellectual circles. Their seemingly revolutionary opinions have detracted the true process of democracy since the 1960s. Their simple opposition against individuals had earned them popularity.

As a consequence, the so-called popularity has misled hundreds of alliterate; illiterate and even literate Eathiopians to follow their footsteps. Historically speaking hundreds, if not thousands are acting as a copycat in the role modeling of these four Professors.

What are the magic formulae that these professors possess that other leaders do not? Why are they so much important to deal with them? And who are they?

Because of their educational career, date of birth and their desire for social status, the four Professors were posed to liberate Eathiopians (Eritreans and Ethiopians) from ignorance of political culture. However, contrary to their followers' expectation, these Professors have been making political conditions for Eritreans and Ethiopians worst than the previous decade. I am afraid that the political heritage of these professors may continue in the next decade as they are all alive and kicking.

In the next few pages, I will attempt to examine the nature of their involvement and the delivery of their career service towards secrecy and conspiracy of Eritreans and Ethiopians along the Revolutionary process.

Background Information: Crown and Cross: cc

Professional career in Ethiopia was little known. Unlike these Professors, the majority of Ethiopian and Eritrean public servants were allowed only to give allegiance to the symbol of the Crown and to the value of the Cross. The Ethiopian Revolution, however, declared the Crown and the Cross as null and void. The government structure and the significance of the Cross were replaced by another CC (Central Committee).

To this day, it is a repeat of sad story to tell that the structures of all political parties including the governments of Eritrea and Ethiopia have remained unchanged. They all

recycle around the concept of Central Committee which is the antithesis of DEMOCRACIA.

Tilling the land, traditional herding, serving kings and Egziabher were the prime occupation of most Ethiopian populace. Teaching, working in either government or in factories was of recent phenomena. Those who were outside agriculture, herding, serving courts or churches would call their occupation as

- students for life
- philosopher/teacher or
- Seekers of alms.

Such was the career, if we can dare to call them careers, for the youth and for the urban until the academic profession came into the scene.

In the academic institution, there were two types of lecturers - foreigners and Ethiopians. Unlike the Ethiopians, the foreigners took lecturing seriously as an academic profession. For the Ethiopian Professors, however, it became a symbol of status in the society.

Why were the Ethiopians not serious about their profession? One major reason was the lack of academic freedom. On campus, there was academic freedom, to be sure. The other reason was that creativity was forbidden in the whole country and so it was part of not allowed to do primary research.

For whatever reason, one can find out from historical documents whether Eathioian lecturers, including the four Professors have authored serious books or had dissertations published. We all know that was all political and that was perhaps why the Geographer, the philosopher, the Doctor and the scientist turn into politicians. The question is politicians who can solve problems or create extra problems. That was and is my concern.

As to those Eathioians who were denied of professional careers, they turned to political activism, volunteers of all kinds and others became seekers for truth. In other words, they had to rebel with a cause. The cause was to change the status quo of the then Eathioia.

The Eway Revolution: conspiracy and Corporation: cc

The Ethiopian Revolution was meant to change the above history and heritage (HH). Colleges and universities were meant to lead the way for change. The challenge was rested on the shoulders of college students and lecturers.

Fortunately or unfortunately, the task of educating or motivating the youth of Eathioia solely rested on the student body of the Colleges and University. It took many years of hard work and intelligence to organize the student union locally and internationally. Thus the Ethiopian Revolution was evolved with huge sacrifices of all kinds.

What is missing now, is the untold story of all those who had sacrificed their lives, who had lost their career opportunities, and those who were disfranchised by their families.

Who were/are these people? In my opinion, they were/are those college students unionized or not who have been enrolled in colleges and high schools since the 1960s to the 1990s and even beyond. Unlike the Professors, these radical students led the student movement in terms of opening up the culture of conspiracy of the Crown and the fight against transnational corporations also labeled as Capitalist and Socialist Imperialism.

The Eway Revolution was a genuine struggle for change. Peace in Eritrea and DEMOCRACIA in Ethiopia were proposed by the Student Movement. The Eway Revolution was simultaneously taking place in Ethiopia as well as in Eritrea.

The Ethiopian Revolution that was led by the DERG was not the same thing as the Eway Revolution. Many people seem to misconstrue the truth.

Foreign inspired Revolution: confusion and capitulation: cc

Were these students could be able to dismantle the Crown by themselves without the support of others? Conspirators and supporters of the Crown allege that the student body was run by foreign agents such as the CIA of America and KGB of Russia. How nice conspiracy, a balancing act. The real truth was that the student leaders meticulously articulated the conditions of the then Ethiopia and its past. Their communication was through various means including personal touch. Whoever led the Revolution, the Crown collapsed on its own weight.

A classical example of failure by the Crown was not to recognize Sylvia Pankhurst as a world citizen. She had worked more than the emperor himself for the freedom of Ethiopia and Ethiopians. The same failure of recognition was denied to General Ode Wingate.

The Student Movement whether in Ethiopia or Eritrea was in pursuit of Truth? What was truth at the time may seem “unintelligent” in today’s Ethiopia. American students were viewed worldwide in their pursuit of happiness whereas the Eathioian students were “bent” to find the truth. By inference, seeking the truth will lead to happiness. That was the reasoning behind all Eathioian student movements. The question was and is that whether our Professors are/were in the same page.

If it were not for our Professors confusion and capitulation, the Student Movement would have led us to the truth which would held everybody united. Of course, the primary task of the student leaders was first to identify its citizenship. By citizenship it meant to be open about “who we are and where we want to go.” Our Professors did not want to reveal not only from where they came but where they needed to go, i.e. from one’s locality to internationalism. Their careers would have helped them but it did not. And so their agitation was against the elements that were open with their past and who had vision for the future of Ethiopia.

Eathioian Student Movement demanded for freedom and liberty and not cultural change. These Professors began to display behavioral change that at times was “incompatible” with Eathioian cultural values. I am not condoning their change of behavior. The student

movement's priority was to struggle for freedom of speech, writing, assembly and movement from place to place. The time was not for personal behavior, it was for collective action. A time for commitment either to become a citizen of a united country or to be a follower of bully imperialist worlds was required. There was no other choice for Ethiopia.

Citizenship and Commitment's

Citizenship, on a collective level, is

- The ability to defend one's nation
- The freedom for a rational thought

On an individual level, it is

- The ability to decide what is best for oneself
- A stake in one's country and

The lack of the above mentioned factors has led to the demise of the ancient regime and demanded a new approach to Ethiopian Citizenship.

The symbol of Crown (C) was buried while the other twin (C), the Cross is still well and alive. Why?

It is a common knowledge that the other factor for equality among Ethiopians is humanity that is derived from the value of the Cross. Nowadays, the value of the Cross is being examined by many Eritreans and Ethiopians. However, this is not something to be defined by politicians or the clergy. I believe it rests with the realm of each citizen. But citizenship should have emanated from the office of the Crown. It did not happen and it is not happening.

Now, student activists and progressive lecturers behind the scene were busing themselves to erase the significance of the Cross or replace it by something else. An ideological, a theological or a political war was set on, albeit clandestinely. In other words, the role of politicians, economists and philosophers as professional career came into the scene to replace the Crown or the Cross by structuring models for Central Committee.

Let us see who these Professors were/are.

The Role of 4 Professors in Citizenship advocacy

Understanding our past and debating our current affairs will assist us to move forward. For such prospect, the four professors' role in the history of politics and revolution of both Eritrea and Ethiopia will bring a significant contribution negatively or positively.

Who are these professors? Why they are relevant in today's Ethiopia?

They are Andreas, Mesfin, Mesfin and Messai. They are relevant because they are all alive and still remain activists.

The TPLF in Ethiopia claims that it has successfully changed occupation of Tigrians in Tigray and it can do so in the rest of Ethiopia. The PFDJ in Eritrea also claims that it's

changing the nomads into settled agriculturists whereas the urban dwellers are in the process of becoming professional soldiers. The PFDJ claims that this process can be done by advocating democracy and justice.

But again people outside the circles of TPLF and PFDJ still remind me of the famous quotation from a British writer that “a blind man in a dark room looking for a black cat which is not there.”

The DERG, EPRP and other relevant organizations have struggled to change the policies and politics of Ethiopia. Due to their credit, the DERG and EPRP have succeeded to change the process of career occupation in Eritrea and Ethiopia. Their role was one of a system mainly of the Crown and not of the Cross. It is arguable that the Military Junta of Menghistu and some leaders of EPRP have followed a strict rule of Command and Control (CC) structured means of leadership. But that does not mean that their followers know and accept the structure of Central Committee. One group (the DERG) was in power while the other (EPRP) was outside the power of governance. Besides, both were in the midst of turmoil. There was no peace in Eritrea or security in Ethiopia.

It was either a struggle for democracy or counter democracy fueled by fascistic nature of the military.

It is in this area of contention that I want to point out the merits and demerits of Professors Mesfin Wolde Mariam, Messai Kebede, Andreas Eshete and Mesfin Araya vis-à-vis the Eway Revolution

Geography and Philosophy: Professors Mesfin and Messai

I abhorred geography class. In my high school, I began to dislike geography class for two simple reasons. On one hand, an Australian teacher knew very little about geography while on the other, a geography teacher from England had too much detail about the world but not about Ethiopia.

When I joined the Addis Ababa College, I intended to take courses from the department of Geography but many of my senior students discouraged me because of Professor Mesfin's. At the time, I did not know whether it was because of his credential or pattern of behavior.

After college, I came to appreciate the physical geography of Eritrea and Ethiopia together. I have crisscross from the town of Moyale, at the southern tip of Ethiopia, to Karora, in the northern end of Eritrea; and from the port of Assab in the east to Kurmuk in the west. The Nile Basin, the Red Sea Corridor and the Rift Valley all entice me to death. I wished that Geography class was a compulsory subject to all Eathioian students.

What is Geography, by the way? Why is it so important to study? Does the lack of knowledge in Geography put Eathioians at loggerheads? Definitely, we all were at a very vulnerable position of not knowing our own localities, physically or politically.

Geography is unique in bridging the social sciences with the natural sciences i.e. physical geography.

Human Geography concerns with the dynamics of cultural societies and economies while physical geography concerns with understanding of the dynamics of physical landscapes and environment.

Technically it is an education for life and for living. Geography whether gained through formal education, travel, fieldwork or expedition may help people to be more socially and environmentally sensitive. Those who are informed about geography have become responsible citizens and employees. For Geography, according to Wikipedia, is the science that studies the lands, the inhabitants, and all features of the Earth.

Human survival depends on physical or relational space. The whole world fights to either assert his/her identity or to possess a passport to travel. Both the ID and the PASSPORT are the major instruments for existence. Other than these two, all other requirements are just gimmicks of various kinds.

So what was the subject matter and who were the people that would have helped Eathiopians to assert their origin and destination?

In the forefront, just as we had depended for centuries on the Crown and on the Cross, after the Ethiopian Revolution, we were to rely on both Geography and Philosophy.

The role of Professor Mesfin W. Mariam in the realm of Geography and Professor Messai Kebede's in Philosophy were necessary to ease the national confrontation.

Instead, both Professors chose to join the war of destruction/attrition.

What did Professor Mesfin do to help us understand ourselves and our environment? He kept us in the dark by keeping himself aloof and secretive. He did not want to be a liberated man in the sense that he was unwilling to tell the student body where he came from and where he wanted to go. He used to simply hide his ID and his Passport.

What about Messai Kebede? Who is he and what is his title? According to written documents, he was educated in France and now he is teaching in Dayton, Ohio. Student evaluation indicates that he is not happy to teach. Obviously, he is used to dictate using the gun instead of the pen. Messai Kebede is a philosopher and what is that?

Philosophy "is an academic discipline that exercises reason and logic in an attempt to understand reality and answer fundamental questions about knowledge, life, morality and human nature. Love of wisdom or fundamental truth."

A set of views and theories of a particular philosophy concerning such study or an aspect of it has been deciphered by most Eathioian PhDs (doctors). Professor Messai Kebede

was the master of all our PhDs. It is my contention that Professor Messai Kebede did neither pursue the love of wisdom nor seek the truth.

Like his colleague Professor Mesfin W. Mariam, he also opposed the true Eway Revolution but supported the foreign imposed Revolution of the Soviet Union.

Since both Geography and Philosophy were very critical subject matters both Professor Mesfin W. Mariam and Professor Messai Kebede were positioned very critically to educate Eathiopians about their citizenship and the world they want to live in. The tools of identity via Geography and the passport for moving forward with philosophy were in their hands. Instead of proposing they chose to oppose and to this day, they are doing it. I don't know what their personal problem is.

Could it be an identity crisis or a cultural crisis? The sooner, the better for it resolves many of our own problems. The physical Geography of Eritrea and Ethiopia; the human knowledge as accumulated by the Tewahdo Churches should be the guiding principles for these two professors. By following these principles, many hundreds if not thousand of youth will benefit from their path, the path of proposition instead of opposition.

I appeal to both masters of Geography and Philosophy write some kind of autography or a memoire of their **ገጽ ለ** so that others may follow.

Political Literature and Culture: Professors Andreas and Mesfin

These two professors have been together since kindergarten days. The only difference is that they obtained their first degrees in America and in Ethiopia respectively.

- Both Professors never grew up to enjoy their birth villages
- Both were born for leadership as indicated by their DOB
- Both have participated in student movements, one local the other in foreign
- Both are good in communication, one in written the other in verbal
- Both are shallow in Geography and Philosophy
- Both lead simple and humble life style
- Both have little love for money but lot of for politics and fun
- Both never wrote books
- Both blames their colleagues, Andy blames BMR and Mesfin PIA
- Both earned Ph.D.
- One is tenured professor, the other is not
- One capitulates, the other stagnates
- One opens his background, the other hides his background

From these ten similarities and three differences, one can evaluate the contributions of each Professor in the annals of Eathioian Revolution. The youth of Eritrea and Ethiopia can definitely learn some lesson from both Professors in terms of political literature and culture.

Concluding Remarks: Resignation and Retirement

For whatever reasons, college and university students had attacked, at times in a wild manner, both Professors Mesfin and Messai. In return the two Professors had resorted not only to be arrogant professors but also indulge to go into other fields of study such as politics, sociology, and psychology and recently to Human Rights and History.

But deep in them, like many Eathioian intellectuals, I feel they had grudges towards their colleagues and friends. I personally know that Professor Mesfin W.M. has a personal grudge against Tsegeye G. Medhin alias DEBTERAW. Professor Mesfin considers DEBTERAW as his intellectual antagonist.

This is unhealthy condition politically and unwarranted investment in the next world for the Professor. I hope he becomes a citizen of Eathioia by asking EGZIABHER for forgiveness and an apology to his soul mate DEBTERAW.

As to Professor Mesai Kebede, he thinks that the dislocation of Eathioians were the result of radical college students. He is forgetting that he was a member of organized killers and hooligans. I think he should be grateful for the victims of the Red Terror. No one is up for their stories. The voice of the Professor is heard and that of the victims is silenced. What a travesty!

In the same way, Professor Andreas Eshete's pet noire was Berhane Meskel Redda. BMR was the single intellectual who challenged Andreas's education including English literature. To this day, Andreas wishes to bury the intellectual capacity of Berhane Meskel Redda. It is a sad story to tell. We cannot build political institutions unless and otherwise, Professor Andreas halts his personal attack on BMR and reveals his bio or writes his autobiography to the public. The challenge between this two was not personal, rather it was a contention between an educated Eathioian versus an educated Eathioian. Or alternatively, Andreas is a m'hur akal ምዑር አካል whereas Berhane Meskel Redda was a Tsinhate m'hur akal ፅንሐተ ምዑር

Professor Mesfin Araya, on the other hand, is bitter on President Issaias. The Professor may have issues on the conduct of the Eway Revolution but it is not to be taken personally. In fact, Mesfin has carried out the Program of EPLF all the way to New York. Professor Mesfin Araya was nominated to be a political officer for Eritrean student association but he could not carry out EPLF's political agenda. Why? The majority of Eritreans were not ready for democracy. Theirs was a national colonial question. Professor Mesfin's agenda was a democratic revolution, it was incompatible program of action and he has to resign from his position.

To sum up, all four Professors have been in the struggle for change. They have done their part whether for themselves or for the country as a whole. No one disputes this. And no one should be praised or blamed for all the past. It is history. But history teaches us a lesson and we all want the lesson – the lesson of wisdom and truth.

The lesson of WISDOM is expected from the relatively old Professors Mesfin W. Mariam and Messai Kebede.

The other lesson is about TRUTH and it is to be retrieved from the relatively young Professor Andreas Eshete and Mesfin Araya. As a communicator of oral and written history, we demand their biography and memoir of revolutionary struggle.

Let us hope for a better political program. The year 2013 has something of value to all of them and us.

It is time for the 4 Professors to propose not to oppose. Professors should take the lead.

TRUTH WILL PREVAIL

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