

# The Inexhaustible Eritrean Poison

Dear compatriots

This is my personal reaction to the divisive propaganda piece written by the former TPLF cadre Tesfaye Gebreab whose crusade against Ethiopia and the Ethiopian people has continued. In my view Tesfaye's hatred for Ethiopia is not personally motivated. It rather emanates from the deep anti-Ethiopian identity that Italians introduced in 1890 when they created the Eritrean colony. This Italian colonial identity has particularly continued to bleed Ethiopia since the emergence of Eritrea as a separate territory in 1990.

Italian colonialism created Eritrea & Eritrean identity the latter of which is quintessentially anti-Ethiopian. The people of Ethiopia & Ethiopia's past leaders never grasped the lethality of Eritrean identity to Ethiopia. To this day most Ethiopians least appreciate the lethal poison that Eritrean identity represents to Ethiopia. Ethiopians warmly embraced Eritreans as lost brothers & sisters after the Second World War and welcomed them with open arms. Eritreans like Bereketab Habteselassie (who was attorney general during the imperial regime), Asmerom Legesse, Tesfaye Gebreab (the EPLF cadre who grew up in central Ethiopia), flaming former left radicals at Haile Selassie University who later joined ELF & EPLF massively and a whole generation of Eritreans worked hard to destroy Ethiopia. Ethiopia never punished the more than one hundred thousand (100,000) militarily trained Eritrean askaris who joined Italian fascists as soldiers of fortune fighting alongside their masters i.e. the Italian fascists that occupied Ethiopia for 5 years and caused the death of 720000 Ethiopians (between 1935-

1941). In fact far from being punished, Eritreans were rewarded by the imperial regime by way of appeasing these Eritreans following Eritrea's federation with Ethiopia. Admittedly a few hundred former Eritrean askaris had defected from the fascist army of Mussolini and fought alongside Ethiopian patriots. Ethiopia has more than compensated the descendants of these former askaris as witness the hundreds of Eritreans that were settled in Sidamo province and the rest of Ethiopia after they have been given fertile land. Tens of thousands of Eritreans settled in various parts of Ethiopia where they shined prominently in the business sector in places such as Dessie, Kombolcha, Gondar, Bahir Dar, Addis Ababa, Nazareth, Dire Dawa, Harrar, Jimma, etc. Ethiopians have not forgotten patriotic Eritreans such as cornel Belai Habteab who heroically died defending Ethiopia by joining the ranks of the Black Lions unit in southwestern Ethiopia. But that said the majority of Eritrean soldiers fought alongside Italian fascists against Ethiopia till the end of the war and ironically the golden age in the memory Eritreans is the period Mussoloni's fascist army stayed in Ethiopia killing hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians. It was at this time that fascist Italy invested billions of Italian Lires hiring more than 100000 Eritrean askaris to kill and maim Ethiopians thereby creating jobs for Eritreans and making the Italian fascist rule in Ethiopia a source of employment for them. This was the essence of the colonial divide and rule policy that favored Eritreans as trusted and loyal colonial subjects of Italian fascists over the Ethiopians who resisted Italian colonial rule.

Following the end of Italian occupation of Ethiopia, emperor Haile Selassies was restored to power. It was mostly exiled Ethiopians, few patriots and significant number of Ethiopian collaborators who worked in cahoots with Italian fascists that staffed and manned Emperor Haile Selassie's post-war government. This post-war regime of Ethiopia that lasted till 1974 tried to cover up the heinous records

of the Eritrean collaborators (whose heinous records against Ethiopia exceeded all other collaborators, including the records of Ethiopian collaborators in its magnitude) something that no self-respecting nation would do. In war-torn Europe, those who fought alongside the Nazi's and fascists did not go scot-free, they were rather made to face justice for collaborating with Nazis and Fascists. The children of Nazi and Fascist collaborators were not allowed to be proud of the mercenary role of their parents. In Ethiopia the reverse was the case and that catapulted the likes of Meles Zenawi to the forefront of the Ethiopian political arena.

Eritrea was rewarded hugely by the imperial regime of Ethiopia in terms of construction of schools, hospitals, roads, etc. at the expense of other provinces of Ethiopia. Eritreans who were made to grope in the dark after having been denied to pursue education beyond the three years of rudimentary elementary school in which they were taught about the greatness of Italy and the Roman race and the inferiority of Eritreans were graced with the construction of many schools, including many high schools and other institutions of learning so much so that they were among the best represented in institutions of higher education next to the capital city Addis Ababa. Eritreans were allowed to control the scaling heights of the Ethiopian economy (their dominance in the business sector was conspicuous till 1998). All these did not make Eritreans lessen their visceral hatred for Ethiopia and whatever Ethiopia stood for. Eritrean nationalists worked tirelessly to break up Ethiopia and finally they succeeded in that endeavor thanks to the Tigrean cabal by the name of TPLF that Eritreans helped and worked with till 1998 when they broke ranks owing to conflict of interest which revolved around appropriating the spoils of war (the resources of Ethiopia south of Tigray which TPLF & EPLF pillaged to build Tigray and Eritrea respectively). Readers

need to take note of the fact that the TPLF/EPLF war in 1998/1999 was not about the piece of degraded Tigrean territory called Badme but revolved around who should get the lion's share of the resources of the "enemy country i.e. Ethiopia south of Tigray". Since May 1991, the victorious northern rebels from Tigray & Eritrea (TPLF/EPLF) see Ethiopia south of Tigray, as an occupied territory.

As events later and today clearly show Ethiopia had paid and is still paying huge price for suppressing and covering up the untold, if violent, killing or decimation of 720,000 (seven hundred and twenty thousands) Ethiopian citizens by Italian fascists and the more than 100,000 (one hundred thousands) Eritrean askaris who were instruments of Italian fascist army that bayoneted pregnant women and hanged Ethiopian patriots while Italian pilots rained mustard gas on the defenseless people of Ethiopia. Today Eritreans who still see Ethiopia as their archenemy continue to use their venomous pen spewing hate and spreading divisive Italian colonial ideas as this piece of Tesfaye Gebreab that I have herewith attached clearly corroborates. Eritrean hatred for Ethiopia and Ethiopians is pervasive. Since I came to Europe as a refugee more than 30 years ago, I have repeatedly observed how Eritreans who committed acts of crime in various Western countries reported their identity as being Ethiopians whenever they are caught violating the law. None of us wanted to ask why their hatred is so pervasively omnipresent. It never occurred us to ask ourselves what is it that makes Eritreans abhor and hate Ethiopian identity so much. Why would not they see us just as neighbors even long after they chose to secede from Ethiopia? Why are they fixated on Ethiopia? When will Eritreans stop their ill designs on Ethiopia? When will their negative obsession with Ethiopia stop? Since the creation of Eritrea in 1890, it not only served as the instrument of the evil machination of Italian colonialists but also successfully served as instrument of

Ethiopia's deconstruction by serving as proxy or pawns in the anti-Ethiopian war Arab nationalists (that runs the whole gamut from Nasser's Egypt to the Baath parties of Syria, Iraq, conservative Gulf Arabs) and even neighboring Sudan and Somalia have been waging against Ethiopia. Even during the recent 2005 May election in which Kinijit attracted a huge support among the Ethiopian population, both EPLF and its opponents in the Diaspora were quick to demonize Kinijit. The Eritrean government came up with the AFD project to destroy Kinijit and with the active support of mercenary elements within the so-called Kinijit International Leadership and the tacit approval of opportunist elements that sneaked into the Kinijit leadership inside Ethiopia, they succeeded to divide the Kinijit support in the Diaspora. Today Eritrea hosts and supports anti-Ethiopian organizations such as OLF, ONLF, etc. that are bent on the break up of Ethiopia on ethnic lines as it has done in the past by supporting the anti-Ethiopian Tigrean cabal by the name of TPLF that it worked with harming Ethiopian national interest till 1998.

In light of the continued enmity of Eritreans which dates back to 1890, the date of the creation of Eritrea as a synthesis of inimical Italian colonial design and hatred for anything Ethiopian, it is imperative to ask the following question. When are we Ethiopians going to realize that the poison which Italian colonialism planted in 1890 in the form of a divisive and malignant Eritrean identity, in what was once called Bahire Negash or Midri Bahiri and later renamed Eritrea in 1890, remains to be the anti-thesis of Ethiopia? It is time that we rethink our notion of Eritrean identity which we have so far lightly dismissed as being benign identity but which continues to represent poison for Ethiopians since 1890. The Italian colonial poison that has become part and parcel of Eritrean identity (an identity of enslavement by Italians of which Eritreans are so proud) continues to poison Ethiopia more than 22 years after independent Eritrea came into existence and

decided to break ranks with Ethiopia in May 1991. Read Tesfaye Gebreab's piece and see what Eritrean nationalists are hatching for us with the help of TPLF and Oromo ethno-nationalists. Let us not for a moment forget though that Tesfaye G/Ab, the EPLF agent & entrepreneur of hate, who has so far produced three divisive books to create a wedge between Amharas and Oromos, has been promoted by none other than the leaders of Ginbot 7 such as Berhanu Nega. Berhanu Nega wrote a flattering preface to one of Tesfaye's books in which the former prime minister of Ethiopia, the late Ato Akililu Habtewold, has been falsely accused of abrasively offending the sensibilities of the late Brigadier General Tadesse Birru. The alleged statement, falsely attributed to the late Prime Minister Akililu Habtewold, has been fabricated and spread by the arch enemy of Ethiopia Bereketeab Habteselassie who, like all hate-filled ethno-nationalists, has a knack for fabricating such lies at which ethno-nationalists like him are adept. Neither Tesfaye Gebreab nor Berhanu Nega, the enthusiastic promoter of the former, can come forward with evidence to justify or substantiate the allegations and false charges directed at the late Prime Minister Akililu Habtewold by way of creating a chasm between Oromos & Amharas. Equally the ESAT television and radio that serves as convenient propaganda tool or mouthpiece of Ginbot 7 group has been promoting Tesfaye Gebreab while currently maintaining diplomatic silence over the anti-Menelik campaign that OLF, TPLF and entrepreneurs of hate such as Tesfaye Gebreab have been promoting by targeting the Amhara population and the history of Ethiopia. It is all the more striking that the former TPLF cadre Tesfaye Gebreab has come forward to claim our attention at this time when TPLF has mobilized Oromo ethno-nationalists to build a controversial monument meant to pillory emperor Menelik and Amharas thereby detracting us from concentrating on the huge tracts of fertile land of northern Ethiopia (Gondar region) TPLF has signed away by giving

it to Sudan. By the way it is interesting to hear from Tesfaye's mouth the ill designs of the Oromo ethno-nationalists (OLF, OPDO, ODF) who have come in various shapes and sizes but have their eyes fixed on their grand strategic plan of creating an independent Oromia state. Tesfaye's effort to take out Merrera Gudina & Butcha Demekessa's Oromo Federalist Congress out of this political equation as though the Oromo Federalist Congress these two Oromo ethno-nationalists lead cares about Ethiopian unity is meant to deceive us and relax our guard. Only a fool or an ignorant that does not grasp the ABC of ethnic-nationalism fails to understand the fact that the various Oromo ethno-nationalists may differ on their tactics or methods of achieving their ultimate goal but all do agree on their strategic goal i.e. the creation of independent Oromia on the ruins of Ethiopia. And the ethnic-federalism project of TPLF is paving the road for the realization of this grand project of Oromo ethno-nationalists, i.e. the birth of independent Oromia that Tesfaye Gebreab impatiently and gleefully looks forward to.

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