

Leadership vs Citizenship: The case of Eritrea and Ethiopia

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On July 4, 2017, a personal friend called me to say Happy Four. We were in the same Economics class and working in Economic Planning of Urban and Rural Ethiopia/Eritrea. From our study of history of Economic Thought, a flash came to me the year July 4, 1776. It was when Adam Smith wrote his thesis on "The Wealth of Nations." The most telling credo of this thesis was that "there is a selfish man in every man." The current situation in both Ethiopia and Eritrea is a testimony to this credo/value.

In the American economic history, it took 241 years since that time up to the present. And it is still seems to work as Capitalism. In Ethiopia including old Ethiopia currently Eritrea had survived without this credo of selfishness for over 5 millennia. How did they do it? By force of arms, No. By threatening, maybe. By persuasion, definitely yes. By following the Orthodox way of life, which is balancing the past and the future.

Adam Smith, a Scottish man was an economist, a philosopher and an author. His ideas of classical economics, modern free market, division of labor and the invisible hand were spread among western nations. In Ethiopia, systems of primitive, slave, feudal were rampant. Instead of modern market or division of labor, Ethiopians were conducting Trade and Climate issues. Who is talking now about trade and climate? History repeats itself.

My friend invited me to thank and to celebrate the American July 4 of Independence. He told me that nobody gave us independence in neither his home country Ethiopia nor in my own home country Eritrea. I asked him whether his birth place starts with the letter B or M. He said with both Borona and Mekane. Now I caught him in ground zero for B=13. For the readers' info, mine starts with the letter Z working backwards to the letter A. This methodology brings us to our long lasting relationship of urbanization and rural process. He came here to study urban affairs and I came here to study rural transportation. We both were in the right track for the purposes of Ethiopian citizenship and Eritrean leadership.

What went wrong then with this process of democratization and transformation in Ethiopia and Eritrea? There was nothing wrong with the process of democracy and democratization (DD). The problem was with the Central Planning (CC). Obviously, the letter C comes before D and it created havoc and destruction in Ethiopia as well as in Eritrea.

Planning by nature and design is iterative. There is a short term as well as a long term if not intermediary. Having worked for two years in this type of planning, a radical planning aka Central Planning imported from the then Soviet Union was imposed upon the people and country of Ethiopia despite the opposition by the true Ethiopian and Eritrean Revolutionaries.

I reminded my personal friend about Debre Sina, Debre Bizen, and Debre Damo in the north, about Dabat & Debark in the central region; Dembi Dollo in western region; and Dire Dawa in the Eastern region. All these DDs are located in Ethiopia and Eritrea. Can they tell about migration and urbanization? The current state of affairs, both in Ethiopia and Eritrea are the same.

My personal friend and I were radical for political ideas but we were not radical supporters of Economic Central Planning. We supported radical political revolution when we were at the commercial bank and at college. It was not difficult for both of us to support the political change in Ethiopia having known Wallelign Makonnen (WM). For in M lies Wisdom and in M belies materialism. Both letters balance each other.

When it comes to the question of nationalities, Wallelign did not attempt to distinguish between Blood vs. Bones (BB). This is not for political scientist least for social scientist. He was simply trying to set fire for dialogue and debate among college students and elites of the country. And indeed he succeeded. But the national question as perceived by the nationalists of all types has been perverted up to the present day. Instead of his father Makonnen, Wallelign chose Martha Mebrahtu, a double MM to produce energy instead of fire. Wallelign and Martha's Energized Ethiopian Movement is still alive.

What is to be done apart from this bickering of political history? My suggestion is simple and forward. Let us continue with the WM movement. And let us form a united front for leadership and citizenship for both Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The leadership concept should begin with the following historical facts and personalities:-

1. An individual leader from Eritrea's EPLF (to be named)
2. An individual leader from ELF (to be named)
3. An individual leader from TPLF (educated)
4. An individual leader from EDHIN (moralist)
5. An individual leader from OLF (passionate)
6. An individual leader from Mieson (to be nominated)
7. An individual leader from the DERG (to be searched and nominated)
8. Other DD leaders from woreda, awraja, town and cities.(to be elected)

The above would be leaders would be willing to tell their true stories, personal as well as professional in the Ethiopian Revolutionary and Reactionary War. It is time to reconcile the two approaches that led us to where we are. It will help us as a guide to where we are going in the future.

If need be, I can nominate or suggest the right people for the right cause. All we need is the right leadership based on the check and balance system of Dega-Weina-Kola climatic system in Enations of Eritrea and Ethiopia.

And the right type of citizenship for the masses. More on Citizenship next time.

For questions and inquiries

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