

WHEN WAS ISEYAS EFEWERQI LED TO THE RISE OF DICTATOR

Biographies of Iseyas and his father Efewerqi are what everyone wants to know. And this is what an Eritrean writer wants disclose. But there is no possibility of knowing it because it is highly guarded by the son, Iseyas. **In fact we know that to go in quest of this history is deadly.** So far it took many lives. This continued for a long time. As we know the testimonies are aging and dying. By now it is almost untraceable.

I don't mean that the Eritrean individuals are not doing their best to save Eritrean history. Here there is no discussion because internet can testify about their good works. In addition to this without help of their works, this article could not have been born. But what I am saying is that this is not enough when it is compared with what we are losing. How can be proved this? It is enough if we observe the strength of our deep division that has a root in our **lost and distorted Eritrean history.**

Back to history of immigrants, as they say Father Abraha with his four years old son Efewerqi immigrated from Temebien (Tigray) to Eritrea. We don't know the exact time but we can say that it was around in 1920 at the beginning of the colony's finest moment that was attracting more labors from inside and outside Eritrea. For this two migrants, Zelot ጸሎት, a village four miles south-east of Asmara, in the province of Hamasien, became their contact address. Zelot is one the best Hamasien villages. It has a wonderful climate and tourist site, like canyons cut by rivers that flow towards Red Sea. At my first sight I was amazed and I don't think that Abraha and Efewerqi had another impression.

As many Eritrean highland villages, Zelot welcomed the two immigrants with its consuetudinary (or customary) law that guides to residence. In Eritrea to be a *gebbar*/ገብር of one village it is not simple task it takes good 40 years and this can be affected by crime records because citizenship asks good moral character. This means Abraha and Efewerqi knew after 40 years of residence, in their case from 1920(?) to 1960, is allowed to be Zelot villagers and then automatically Eritrean citizen. But if an immigrant resides in Eritrean town for forty years he can apply and get Eritrean citizen but not of a village. For this any village is not willing to give a burial ground, let alone any plot of land for any person who has only Eritrean town citizen. But a village gives a land for school, hospital, church, mosque, etc. buildings. This shows Eritrean village and town contradiction sees its solution only after their democratically elected government.

Why is the law of the Eritrean villages so tight? Very simple, for an Eritrean peasant or *gebbar* a land is considered as a factory /ፋብሪካ*fabrica*. But developed nations who have solved this problem like Switzerland it is after 12 to 10 years, German after 8 years, becoming a citizen of Australian is often a long, complicated process.

When an immigrant is considered as *gebbar* he has two important keys in his hands. These are;

- a) Political right that enables him to elect or be elected {for example mayor or as mayor (ጭቅቃ) of the village}
- b) Economical right that enables him to receive a plot of land (ሐደ ቃጽዖ ናይ መሬት) when the village distributes a land between its *gebbars* (or peasants or farmers)

So, *gebbar* is a villager who:

- a) Lives at the low level of **domestic production**
- b) Pays tax, fights and dies for the throne of his master or governor
- c) Receives no compensation for his service and
- d) Has the custom that prepares funeral feast (ተገዝር) after his death

Is there a right to immigrate? As Abyssinian man I say yes, because migration and immigration are two elements that made Horn African nations. When these two elements follow their simple natural courses, they solve problems of individuals, families, etc. This is the well-being for all. For example,

while Eritrean emigrants improve their lives by working, they contribute something to the growth of hosting countries; also it is true that immigrant workers, families, communities in Eritrea play the same. We are eyewitness of thousands of Ethiopians (to be specific ኅግራዎች) who were working hard in rural and urban areas to make Eritrea produce more. But it is not always as it should be because there are individuals like Efewerqi (that we see later) who turn smooth immigration to be a great threat to a society.

With time Efewerqi got married to Adanesh. She was from Adwa (Trigray). This is not complete information because it doesn't show the marriage date, place, picture, etc.

We can say that their marriage was not fortunate because they married during the Second World War that lasted from 1939 to 1945. Year 1941 was the last chapter for Italian colony and the beginning for the British administration (BA) in Eritrea. The fall of the colony was sudden. This created a chance for BA to take all the wealth of the helpless colony Eritrea. To add salt to injury the year 1941 was also the establishment or birth of Unionist party (Up) in Addis Abeba. As soon as it was born it was exported to Eritrea with funds and guide of its creator king of Ethiopia Haile selasse. All together BA and the king were to undo the Eritrean social fabric. And below we will see the role of this young family of Efewerqi and Adanesh that was in this critical year of Eritrean history.

Despite of this the young Adanesh became pregnant and gave birth to Iseyas according to Wikipedia, on February 2, 1946, in Asmara capital city of Eritrea at a time when few young Eritrean government schools were trying to exist. Of this new phenomenon Asmara was the leader. So to be born at the center of place where school was opening its door for a child to come and learn was a great fortune for Iseyas. When we think about the Old Italian colonial schools in the aftermath of war they were thinking and weighing of what to do with their fascist school textbooks.

While the Up was entering Eritrea it didn't show its politics and army. It showed only its politics because its army was left secret in Eritrea-Ethiopia border. From this, waves of terrorism that had the capacity to cover the whole Eritrea were leaving according to necessities of Up calls. Before or after attacks, churches, እንዳሰውዋ, etc. were their preferable halting-places. These terrorist attacks against the unarmed Eritrean civilians left history hard to trace but a closer look at history of Efewerqi shades some light on it.

Beyond any doubt Efewerqi was one of the terrorists front runner cadre. Michela Wrong says that Efewerqi "was a committed Unionist." (3). To conduct illegal activists in Eritrea Efewerqi was more suited man because he had good accumulated knowledge of south and north of river Mereb. This is without saying anything of his working status that was struggling against his poverty on daily bases.

First and foremost, Efewerqi broke the Eritrean consuetudinary law, by being a member of a party before he resides for 40 years in Eritrea. To make the matters worse, he was a terrorist. Everything considered Efewerqi had committed serious crimes against humanity. He absolutely deserved death penalty. But time was on his side just like his son of today.

Perhaps it was at this circumstances the famous phrase of Fitewrari Layne/ፊተውራሪ ላይን of Areza, that says "እዩ ሐደ ሐጢአት መእስ ሐደ ከልቢ ዝ ኣዕበከዮ ይነኸሰካ = *It is a sin when a dog that you have raised bites you*" was born. It was born in to win or lose contest that was between him and priest Dimotros. The priest was raised and learned in Layene house by his father raèsi Kidanemariam. And during the establishment of Up the priest was acting as a reliable reference point for the Up. In fact there is a reason to believe that Areza was halting place for one of the attack wave roads Adwa- Areza- Mendefera-Decamare-Asmara though the priest.

ካብ ሐደ ገበላ ናብ ሐንቲ ሺልላ



Efewerqi, thanks to his activities of terrorism, suddenly became the richest man. He transferred from *gebbla/hilal* (ወገራ.= entrance hall; -church-vestibule) to villa. The picture on the left, 10 years old Iseyas with his 3

young brothers, captures and communicates wealth of Efewerqi that was in 1956. I doubt if sons of the Ethiopian high officials, ministers, generals, etc. of that time had such dresses, hats, shoes, etc.

Up won the election in 1952. After that Efewerqi was no more needed. The question was where to go and hide with assets **accumulated** through **crime**. The solution was to be back to place of origin. From this, more than 200 km far away, he was coming to see his family once in a blue moon. Instead of doing this, taking his family to the place where his heart led him didn't happen.

This is clear that wezero Adanesh had a full responsibility of the family by acting as a mother and father. She was working not only as house-wife but also as producer and seller of national beer or *swwa/hw-ph*. It would be a great mistake not to believe that this beer factory was one of terrorism halting places in the heart of Asmara. Iseyas Efewerqi can be a witness to this event. But for now here is testimony of Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen that sheds light on history of the family, Efewerqi, his wife Adanesh, their son Iseyas, and their wealth.

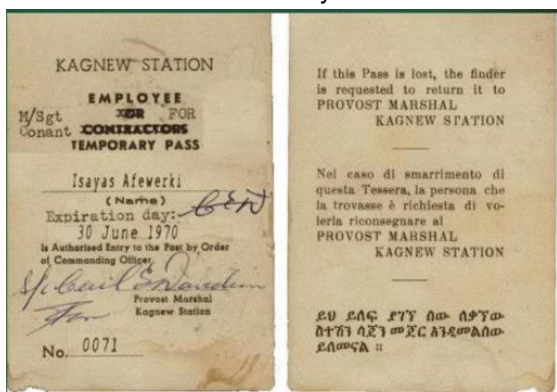
BIO NOTES ON ERITREAN PRESIDENT ISAIAS AFWERKI Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen ... 2008 November 12, 10:55 (Wednesday) 08ASMARA543_a

12. (C) The Early Years of Little Beer Pot (ንኡስ ስውዋ ሳርማ): Isaias' father, Afwerki, comes from the village of Tselot (Zelot ጸሎት), which is perched on the lip of a 7,000' escarpment four miles southeast of Asmara. When Isaias was a boy Afwerki reportedly spent much of his time in Tigray, where he owned a coffee farm that was later nationalized by the Derg. With Afwerki largely absent, Isaias lived with his mother (rumored to have family roots in Tigray) in a working class neighborhood in eastern Asmara near the train depot and the Lutheran church. Isaias' mother made and sold a traditional beer called sewa (*swwa/hw-ph*). By some accounts, Isaias was nicknamed the Tigrinya equivalent of "Beer Pot," after the ceramic jug from which sewa is dispensed. Q Qoday he is a QeQvy whisky drinker, but perhaps as a youth his nickname referred as much to his habits as to his mother's business. (2)

According to **ambassador's** report Iseyas has no values that he has learned from his two parents at his early age. And the Abyssinian school doesn't struggle to read child's wounded mind because it is always without specialists in this field. We know that he was expelled at his first year of his higher education. But we don't know clearly what the main cause of his weakness was. It can be lack of ethical standards and moral values that he has not. I believe that Eritrean Liberation Front had something to say about this. That is why he was sent to China. But did he improve?

<<Isaias was sent to China by the Eritrean Liberation Front for political commissar training in the 1960s, where, according to the Chinese ambassador, "he learned all the wrong things.">> (3)

After 4 years Iseyas took second training in kagnew station Asmara on 30 June, 1970. But at this time the trainers were not Chins but CIA. Tesfamichael Giorgio (TG) was the only testimony of this top secret. This guy was murdered by order of Iseyas in Addis Ababa in 1992 because he disclosed the secret meeting that was between Iseyas and CIA in the manifesto " Massawa Symposiums' that took place in 1984. Here is part of his testimony including Iseyas' temporary pass to Kagnew Station of 1970 that assures testimony of TG.



"አሜሪካኖቹም፣ በበኩላቸው የመጣላቸው ደብዳቤ በደስታ ተቀበሉት። ከዚያም በኋላ የቡድኑ መሪ የሆነው ኢስያስ አፈወርቂ ራሱ መጥቶ ከአሜሪካኖቹ ጋር እንዲነጋገር ቀጠሮ ተደረገ። በተባለውም፡ ቀን እኔ ራሴ በማሸከረከረው የመንግስት ላንድሮቨር መኪና ክደቀምሐረ አላ (ዓላ) በረሃ

ድረስ ሐጃ፡ ኢስያሳን ወደ አስመራ ይሻው መጣሁ። በአስመራ ከተማ ውስጥም፡ ለሁለት ሰዓት ያህል በመኪናው ሳንሸራሸረው ቆይቼ በቀጠረው ሰዓት ቃኘው ጣብያ ወሰድሁት። አሜሪካኖችም የሴኩሪቲ ችግር እንዳይፈጠር ብለው ውይይቱ ሚስተር በውሊንግ በተባለው የቃኘው ጣብያ ሴንትራል ኢንተለጅንስ ዲፓርትመንት ባልደረባ መኖርያ ቤት፣ ማለትም ቅዱስ ፍራንሲስኮ ካቴድራል አጠገብ ተካሄደ። በአሜሪካኖቹ በኩል ከሪፖርት ኮፕላንድ ጋር ሊሎች ሶስት የሚሆኑ ከፍተኛ ባለስልጣኖች ነበሩ። (4) (የምጽዋዕ ሲምፖዚየም; ተስፋንኪኤል ጆርጆ, የተገንጣዮችና የሲአይኤ ግንኙነት, ጥር 1974 ዓ/ም, ምጽዋ, ገጽ 50-51).

To come to a conclusion, we have seen the documents that testify secret meeting between Iseayas and CIA that took place in Asmara on 10 June, 1970. This shows that they were able to meet and carry out the negotiations in person at any place, country, island, etc. in addition the swift and secure communication links (like radio, walky-talky).



In that little book የምጽዋዕ ሲምፖዚየም; TG mentions and numbers the topics that were on the table of Iseayas and CIA officers meeting. But he was not there with them and he didn't mentioned how he knew it. In case if he was told by Iseayas after the meeting, we know that Iseayas never tells the truth.

Without any doubt the topics that were on the table are kept secret. I believe that they were military strategies and tactics. These might be still alive in CIA archive Kagnev Station Asmara in USA classified as CIA successful military strategies that led Iseayas Efewerqi to the rise of a dictator.

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Gizie-Lewti. Com Swiss October 21, 2015

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- 2) US diplomatic cables revealed by WikiLeaks: **BIO NOTES ON ERITREAN PRESIDENT ISAIAS AFWERKI** Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen ... 2008 November 12, 10:55 (Wednesday) 08ASMARA543_a
- 3) >>
- 4) የምጽዋዕ ሲምፖዚየም; ተስፋንኪኤል ጆርጆ, የተገንጣዮችና የሲአይኤ ግንኙነት, ጥር 1974 ዓ/ም, ምጽዋ, ገጽ 50-51.