

Eritrean war of independence

Human costs round 150,000

Economic costs unknown

This is G rated room intended for a General audience including minors. Offensive language is not permitted.

- * አርትራውያን ስወላት እየም 'ሸፍፋቱ' to say ባንዲቲ (bandit: a member of an armed group of thieves who attack travellers)
- * ሕዝቢ አርትራ እዩ ደንቆሮ
- * ትባሃል ዝ እተን አድደታት አርትራውያን አይወለዳን ግን አልለወን ኢሰያስ ...
- *

For the sake of convenience, the article is split-up into 7 sections.

- a) Introduction
- b) Eritrean war for independence
- c) Events in chronological order
- d) More information about ELM
- e) ELM, ELF and EPLF in the Eritrean field
- f) Independence does not Guarantee Freedom
- g) The bricks/ሕጠብ that built ELF and EPLF
- h) The six Iseyas' arch enemies

a) Introduction:

We are witnesses አልሎና ንምስክር to complete misinterpretation of Eritrean history by the Eritrean opponent **chat rooms**. In consequence of this many people, of course, those who do not want to see and hear misinterpreted Eritrean history by those who claim they will bring change, are flooding to rejoin or join the politics of the Eritrean dictator. In regards to this, as an example, the relationship that exists between the Eritrean community in Italy and the politics of the Eritrean dictator first it was weak but now it is improved. So we are with Eritrean history misinterpretation short term negative effects that are making the politics of the Eritrean dictator stronger. And the deadly long term negative effects are coming. Without any doubt Eritrean reconciliation process will be affected.

Worse, most of these chat rooms guys have big problems in their own language, let alone in a second modern language. Few years ago, this communication problem was noticed one day by Amanpour - CNN international reporter saying 'those who do not speak English.' In fact these chat rooms can be characterized as one type of ghetto. Against these crude facts they have been dubbed /ጥሙቻት 'universities.'

For many chat rooms are considered to be *Baito/ባይቶ* extension. As we know *Baito/ባይቶ* is traditional institution where Eritreans learn their civil laws, social affairs, morals, democratic leadership and solution, etc. Cemented on this it was belief and hope of many to see the chat rooms become instruments in bringing cultural change, but unfortunately they are very far away from this because they are rooms where **a bias** (ወጽዓ/ጉድኣት) impacts a speech beyond any limit. There the speaker brings or introduces a bias into the room and the other exists in the mind of a person who is in the room reacts or the other way. As results of this shower of harsh and derogatory (insulting) comments (ብርቱኦ እውን ምጽራፍ ትርጓሜ)

begin to fall. This leaves many wound minds. People that don't know how to defend are highly affected people.

"... biases are tendencies to think in certain ways that can lead to systematic deviations from a standard of rationality or good judgment."

There are many ways that someone can help his community, but only if there is a normal situation. For example, as shown by my works, there is no one who knows Eritrean history, culture, traditional democracy, poems ... better than I do. But these chat rooms are made of stones that give less value for all of these; that is I am unwanted house guest. But we know that without the knowledge of these no one can achieve all that is possible.

What are the general topics of these chat rooms? Are they topics that are interesting to talk about? But, that aside, let us attempt to shed some lights on questions related to "Eritrean martyrs are bandits/ አርትራውያን ሰወአት እየም ሸፍፋቱ" to say ባንዲቲ".

b) Eritrean war of independence

Eritrean war of independence was from 1 September 1961 – 29 May 1991. It is known as the longest fight for independence in modern African history. Nobody knows exactly how many lives were lost, but it is believed to be more than **5%** of the population. Tracey L. Cousin says:

" During the war, more than **150,000** Eritrean died, **60,000** of them were guerrilla fighters ...¹¹ This meant that virtually every family in Eritrea had lost someone to the war. Worse still, there is a large number of disabled war veterans (ዲሳቢሊ ውግግኦች ስትራሬኒ *veterani di guerra disabili*) in the country. Many thousands of the **3 million** Eritreans were disabled by the war.¹² Also, during the war, **400,000** Eritreans took refuge in the Sudan and other areas". (*Tracey L. Cousin: ICE Case Studies, Case Number: 2; Case Identifier: ERITREA; Case Name: Eritrean and Ethiopian Civil War*)

Reference:

11. Fatality Level of Dispute: 545,000 (Ruth Sivard) in *Tracey L. Cousin*.

12. Environment-Conflict Link and Dynamics: Indirect in *Tracey L. Cousin*.

The economic costs of the Eritrean war of independence is unknown

That is we don't know how much money did the war cost Eritrea. This sum of money includes the war damaged villages, mosques, schools, ... and domestic animals like goats, camels, cows ...

• Eritrea did not call for **war reparation** ውግግኦች ምእዘውግና/ጽግግና/ዕርርዮት from Ethiopia. Is it renounced ግዲፍ/ሕዳግ? But demand **reparation** could have the space in the aftermath (ቀሪም) of the war. Not 25 years after the war when many of those who were involved are disappeared ... unlocated war sits faded away ... memories of major battles become weak ...

C) Events in chronological order

In order to know why Eritrea paid such a heavy price we need to travel into the past history more 64 years ago, because "Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it." (እዞም ዝ አይ-ይመሀሩ እታ ታሪኽ እየም ኩኑናት ናብ ደገማ).

► **On December 2, 1950** with the resolution 390 / A (V), the United Nations agreed to demand the federation with **46** votes in favor, **10** against and **4** abstentions. The Soviet-bloc countries vote against the decision. **Peace Congress of the Eritrean People: Eritrean parties accepted the UN resolution.**

► **On September 15, 1952** the British left Eritrea. The British administration ended and the new constitution entered into force. It was officially declared the federation between Ethiopia and Eritrea "under the sovereignty of the Ethiopian Crown". Asmara become capital of the State of Eritrea federated to Ethiopia. Also in this year **1952**, the president of the autonomous government of Eritrea, Tedla Bairu, was elected as president.

► **In 1955** The president of the autonomous government of Eritrea, Tedla Bairu, was forced from office.

Tedla Bairu (From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia) (1914–1984) was an [Eritrean political figure](#). He was the last independent [head of state of Eritrea](#) in 1952. He was then the first [Chief Executive of Eritrea](#) from 1952 in federation with [Ethiopia](#), until he resigned in 1955. He was described as an "opportunist" by his opponents for his unwavering Unionist position. His career paralleled that of [Woldeab Woldemariam](#) besides the fact that he did not support Eritrean independence. ^[1] Killion, Tom (1998). *Historical Dictionary of Eritrea*.^[1]



Picture: [Tedla Bairu](#) bowing to the Emperor
Tedla Bairu bowing to the Emperor
Picture: Courtesy of Jelal Yassin

([Hedgait ዓዲታዊ ትዕይንት](#))

► **In 1958** ●A wave of strikes of workers and street demonstrations shook Eritrea in protest against the continued **violations of the Eritrean constitution** by the Ethiopian authorities. ●The **trade unions** were dissolved and was **imposed press censorship**. The protest, the Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie regime responds with violence: the dead were more than **50**. ● It is formed the Eritrean Liberation Movement (**ELM**), better known as **Mahber Showatte** ማእከላዊ ሹብዓት (better ስብረት ሹብዓት *hbret seven* = association of seven) group for clandestine cells seven members each in which it is structured.

► **On 24 December 1958** the Ethiopian feudal regime of Haile Selassie decided to remove the Eritrean **flag** from all public places.

► **In 1961** some of Eritrean exiles, among them the former president of the Eritrean parliament, Idris Mohammed Adem, founded the Eritrean Liberation Front (FLE) and decide to begin the armed struggle. **On September 1**, a group of guerrillas, led by Hamed Idris Awate, attacking a police station in the western Eritrean province of Barka.

► **On November 12, 1962**, Haile Selassie unilaterally abolishes the federation between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and the latter becomes the "fourteenth province" of his empire. In this same year Hamed Idris Awate dies, one of the founders of the Eritrean liberation struggle.

d) More information about ELM

Redie Bereketeab in his book: (*Eritrea: the making of a nation 1890-1991* p.183-185) says:

"In November 1958, a group of Eritrean refugees in the Sudan took the initiative of organising political activity. Delegates were immediately dispatched to Eritrea to establish clandestine cells, which were formed in groups of seven persons in order to avoid detection by the Ethiopian security forces. As a result of this organizational method, the movement inside Eritrea took the name of Mahber Shewate (association of group of seven). In the Sudan, it was known as Harakat Et Tahrir El Eritrya, Eritrean Liberation Movement (ELM)' and better known in its short form, haraka.

[...]

They were very much influenced by the nationalist movement in the Sudan, and particularly by the Sudan Communist Party.

[...]

The ELM convened its first **congress** in Asmara in 1960. Employing the slogan "Muslims and Christians are brothers, and their unity makes Eritrea one [nation]

The Movement's three main objectives were **unity, independence** and building a **democratic** Eritrea. [...] in the early years of the 1960s it concentrated its activities in trying to organise the coup d'etat. In fact, a **plan of action** was drawn up, but prematurely **aborted** when it was uncovered by Ethiopian security forces. The strategy of achieving independence through a revolutionary coup d'etat proved to **be unrealistic**, at best. In addition to its impracticality, once the scheme was exposed the Ethiopian security forces **inflicted a heavy blow** on the ELM. Consequently the plan was abandoned. Afterwards, toward the mid-1960s, the ELM attempted to undertake armed struggle. However, by the time the movement started to establish military units, the initiative had already been taken by another, rival organization, the Eritrean Liberation Front."

e) ELM, ELF and EPLF in the Eritrean field

We have seen why army struggle was the only choice left for the Eritrean people. We have also seen that the Eritrean army struggle was not founded by ELM/ማሕበር ፕብላይት but by some of ELF leader in exiles. This shows that there was some kind of race between left right wing politics to the Eritrean field in order to start the armed struggle. And this was ended up with the win of the right wing that is to say ELF. Here it seems that the main alleged attacker that made short the life of ELM was the right-wing politics of ELF and the Ethiopian king. Later, as many believed, ELF's history fell in the same situation; EPLF and TPLE united deadly force is to blame for this.

ELM was hand, heart, mind and hope of the Eritrean people. Notwithstanding this, people were not fully aware of its disappearance from our planet. To take this shape there is a reason to believe that ELF's politics had played a lot. But the expulsion of the ELF from Eritrean land was widely heard. Because of this the Eritrea people who were expecting to see unity of the two fronts, were so horrified and dismayed. But the right wing fronts, ELF and EPLF they just don't give a damn to the Eritrean people concern from the day they emerged.

We have discussed about ELF's force expulsion from Eritrea. After that it has seen irreparable divisions and harm from which Iseayas gained a lot. But ELF supporters or organization affiliated remained firm. These groups are really bitter enemies of EPLF in general and Iseayas Efewrqi in particular. But it is not something that worries Iseayas

because he is well familiar with that politics. Weakness is the source of strength but with ELF political fans life doesn't turn out the way you expect. Why? As simple as it seems: "መርቆ ወይ ርገም ሐሙኸ" = bless or curse your father-in-law". **violations of the Eritrean constitution**

The demonstration of 1958 against continued violations of the Eritrean constitution by the Ethiopian authorities showed that the ELM was progressive, democratic and popular movement. But it didn't prevail because of the harsh and hostile circumstances. Notwithstanding this, we feel proud of such first movement of quality that had clean and clear democratic vision for Eritrea's feature in those difficult moments. And also of its members who were ready to follow and pay not only 50 dead in one day but also more and more in order to arrive at their common goal. Our **leftist** dear guys today we would like to give you credit for having the right answer for our cause.

f) Independence does not Guarantee freedom

Right-wing movement or politics can bring **independence** ኢንደፕንደንዝ from political control by other countries. But independence does not guarantee freedom (ግን እታ ኢንደፕንደንዝ አይ-ይትወሐስን እታ ነጻነት/ሐርነት/ሊበርታ Ma l'indipendenza non garantisce la libertà). e.g.

- ▶ Eritrea gained independence from Ethiopia in 1991.
- ▶ አርትራ ረብ/አክክናዊና እታ ኢንደፕንደንዝ ካብ ኢትዮጵያ ኣብ 1991
- ▶ Eritrean rebellion/revolt of independence started in 1961.
- ▶ አርትራዊት ሽፍትንነት ናይ ኢንደፕንደንዝ ጀምመረት ኣብ 1961.
- ▶ The rebels were wearing short trousers and long hairs.
- ▶ እቶም ሸፍፋቱ ነበሩ ይክደኑ ሐጸርቲ ስርረታት እውን ነውሐቲ ጸገሪታት
- ▶ A rebel had a terrible fear from his authoritarian heads.
- ▶ ሐደ ሸፍታ አልሎው ሐንቲ ዓብባይ ፍርሒ ካብ እቶም ናቱ አውቶሪታርያን ርእሲታት
- ▶ A woman rebelled against her tyrant husband.
- ▶ ሐንቲ ሰበይቲ ሸፍፊታ ኮንትሮ/ኮንጻር ኣቲ ናታ ቲራንኖ/tiranno ሰብአይ

So the Eritrean rebellion/revolt of independence started in 1961 was for independence not freedom. This is fulfilled in 1991.

After independence did Eritrea see freedom guaranteed by constitution? The answer is no. What do we mean by **freedom** ሐርነት/ነጻነት? the right to do or say what you want without anyone stopping you: freedom of speech ዘረባ/ thought ሐሳብ/ expression ምግላጽ/ worship ስግደት ... What we can't talk is about the deceiving agenda of EPLF that has been already made unsuccessful by taste of freedom.

e.g. In Eritrea there is no freedom of press, assembly ...
ኣብ አርትራ አይአልሎን ሐርነት/ነጻነት ናይ ማሕተም, ኣስሰምብሊያ ...

g) The bricks/አጠብ that built ELF and EPLF

With time the elements, capitalist, conservatives, nationalists, reactionaries, religious fundamentalist, social authoritarians, etc. that made ELF, began to disintegrate because accepting other people's differences and opinions was not in individual agenda. About this fact **ንእናን ስላማናን** a small book that tells EPLF birth narrates more than enough.

EPLF, the split party, was right-wing movement like ELF and it grew stronger by painting ELF structure from agile to agiler in order to give credit to something

that it had not. As result of this ELF was understood as reactionary force and EPLF as progressive. The tactic was ሐብባል በልላ ቅድሚያ ንስሳ ትብለክ / Tell her that she is cross-eyed before she tells you that you are cross-eyed person. This tactic is still alive. But it can be a biggest mistake in history not remembers the war survival democratic elements from both fronts like the author of this article. **These groups who are part of civil society they can contribute a lot to building democracy in our country.**

h) The six Iseyas' arch enemies

We are talking about efficient and well known tactic of Iseyas' politics with which he destroys his arch enemies (**ቀስቲ ጸላኢ pl. ጸላኢቲ**). Here is a table that shows his past and present foes.

Iseyas' past archenemies

- a) ELF
- b) EPLF's democratization movement
- c) The annexation of Eritrea by Ethiopia

Iseyas' present archenemies

- a) Eritrean constitution
- b) Eritrean unity
- c) Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

What measures does the dictator take to see the fall of his arch-enemies? He always takes desperate measure (ቅብጽ/ተስፋቅብጽ መስፈሪ). With this he started out and built his political career that knows no political settlement approach. This politics has eroded not only Eritrea but also horn of Africa for more than forty years. And it will continue to do because there is no real opposition that can stop it.

During his desperate wars, he is a guy who puts all the dirty cards, like religion, tribalism, partisanship (ሻርንነት), denigration (ምንዋር), white lie (ጻዕዳ ሐሰት), underestimating, etc. on table in extraordinary way. He acts alone. And he has absolute power that makes things go according to his wishes. At the same time he opens hell-gate for those who show clues of disapproval for his wrong actions. Eritreans are stunned (ጽመማት) mind by this.

We are talking about how to become a zombie not only you but also your children. How?

For an example: If you want to help the child of 6 years to realize that EPLF with Iseyas Efewrqi at the helm has always been a right-wing movement, despite all his leftist propagan-da, you cannot tell him the following example due to the fear that Iseyas may hear.

'Dear son, democracy is like a religion. We know that Eritreans do not change their religions overnight when they are happened to be in the Eritrean plateau from lowlands or vice versa. This is also true with left or right wing politics.'

Due to the wrong man at the helm and wrong foundation of the front committing a multitude of human right violations in Eritrea remained widespread for so long of time. But now the fear-rooted government became one of the biggest threats to the world security. Owing to this human right violations in Eritrea became not national but one the most complex international issues. Thanks to this, the commission of Inquiry on Human rights in Eritrea brought the following seven charges of crimes against fear-rooted government of Eritrea in Geneva, 8 June 2016.

- 1) Enslavement = ባርንነት
- 2) Imprisonment = ሐብሲ

- 3) Enforce disappearance = ገብረ አኸብረ ትዕዛድ

- 4) Torture = ቶርቲራ
 5) Persecution = ምስጥጥ
 6) Rape = ዘረፋ

- 7) Murder = ቅጥልጥ
 8) And other inhuman acts እውን ካልእ
 ዘይሰብአዊ ግብሪታት

So it is undeniable truth that EPLF with Iseyas Efewrqi at the helm brought only independence (without mentioning vast area of Baduma (used Badme) left to Ethiopia). Eritrea moved from annexation to independence. To realize this dream Eritrea took 30 years (1961-1991). In process more 150, 000 people died.

The price of independence is so high. The two reactionary fronts ELF and EPLF made the Eritrean people pay (in terms of lives, time, money ...) more than it should.

But with vanguard of ELM we could have another history. That history could have avoided too many losses and damages. We could have embraced dependence in less than thirty years. And we could have been building Eritrean dream in extraordinary way. But **let bygones be bygones ግን ረስቦ እቲ ሕሎፍ**. Let us rise again and build our nation with full respect to our glorious history of struggle and sacrifice.

Eyob Ghebreziabhier Bein
 eyebright@bluewin.ch
 Gizie-Lewti.com
 Swiss August 2. 2016