

The Battle of Adwa, March 1, 1896, was a Defeat, not a Victory

እታ ውግግእ ናይ ዓድዋ, መግጋቢት 1, 1896, ነበረት ሐንቲ ስዕረት, አይኮነትን ሐንቲ ድል

Due to King Menelik's bad policy, the Battle of Adwa was a defeat, not a victory. For this Ethiopia not only lost its sweet cradle (መነክጭ) from birth, but after 39 years also the rest. This bears witness to the fact that Italy bought and occupied northern Abyssinia, thanks to King Menelik, first to implement its short strategy and then, after 39 years, its long one. But this was unknown to the Ethiopian ruling class, anti-democratic, short-sighted and power-hungry.

I find it really funny and ridiculous after selling cradle from birth, history, culture, identity and pride of Abyssinia and Abyssinians to say we have won the battle. But what is the reason behind this? Is there something to hide? Here is the reality.

“ On 2 May 1889, [...], Menelik concluded a treaty with Italy at Wuchale (Ucciali in Italian) in Wollo province. On the signing of the treaty, Menelik said "The territories north of the Merab Milesh (i.e. Eritrea) do not belong to Abyssinia nor are under my rule. I am the Emperor of Abyssinia. The land referred to as Eritrea is not peopled by Abyssinians – they are Adals, Bejaa, and Tigres. Abyssinia will defend his territories but will not fight for foreign lands, which Eritrea is to my knowledge." [56]” (1)

“Treaty of Wichale, Wichale also spelled Ucciali, (May 2, 1889), pact signed at Wichale, Ethiopia, by the Italians and Menilek II of Ethiopia, whereby Italy was granted the northern Ethiopian territories of Bogos, Hamasen, and Akale-Guzai (modern Eritrea and northern Tigray) in exchange for a sum of money and the provision of 30,000 muskets and 28 cannons.” (2)

Where is the birthplace of our Abyssinian race, in Showa or Massawa? Let's try to find out.

Work of Barzano, written in Italian but as my translation, testifies:

“As Abyssinia, the Eritrean tigrine, it was, as said, mainly from the intersection of the Camita and Semite element, not only at a racial level, but also at the legal-institutional and socio-cultural level.” (3)

And others add but the word ‘አውጧስ/ውስተ’ adj and part participle of the transitive verb ‘አውጧስ’ which means (gen) to mix, is mine:

“... for the nucleus of the Ethiopian people are Semites who crossed from Southern Arabia and settled in the high land plateau of Abyssinia. There they acquired such influence and they welded the various tribes of that region into a powerful confederation. The mixture of the races in the Abyssinian people is illustrated by their name, which comes from Habesh, an Arabic word meaning ‘mixed/አውጧስ.’ No name could be more appropriate; for the Abyssinians are partly Semitic, partly Hamitic, and partly Negro. The dominant race, has usually been Semitic since the death of King John in 1888 the leadership has been held by a Hamito-Semitic people.” (4)

Briefly, Bahta Hegos is a mixed race person has parentes from Hamatica and Semitic. Namely Hamatic (the Kunama) + Semitic (Arabic) results Bahta Hegos. This is true of all the rest of the Abyssinians. To form such a wonderful mixed race, called in Tigrinya 'ሐበሻ', where the place of meeting and when was? For "when," which goes back miles and miles, I hope scholars will one day tell the world. But for "where" here's a good example from yesterday that sheds some light on answering the question.

The Italian colony first occupied the Abyssinian coasts. And the port Massawa was the capital of its occupied territory since '5 febbraio 1885'. Later it spread widely and Asmara was its capital. And finally Addis Abebea from 1936 to 1941.

The path that was followed by the Abyssinians was more or less the same as that of the Italian colony. Adulis was their first city and main port. That is to say that Adulis, in Ekeleguzai-Eritrea, is the cradle of Abyssinian race. Then it eventually spread from the lowlands to the Plateaus. Here are the stops on their journey to civilization and decline.

Adulis ⇒ Qohaito ⇒ Metera ⇒ Yeha ⇒ Aksum & the Decline of what is now

A key point to remember the Semitic came with a lot of know-how (ፍልጠት) but with an autocratic management style. The Hamitics were farmers and shepherds but proud of their traditional democracy. As Semitic politics rule Abyssinia century after century the Ekeleguzai miraculously remained a land democratic republic thanks to the traditional democracy of Kunama.

This was happening while Ekeleguzai was fulfilling her duty to the monarchy of the Aksumite kingdom. But after the fall of the kingdom of Aksum, the democratic republic of Ekeleguzai fell into trouble as well. The perpetrators were like warlords such as Mikael Sehul (1692 – 1784), Wube Haile Maryam di Semien (1799-1867), etc. Obviously this made her very weak. But the real killer of her is the current dictatorship that began in 1991. And other traditional democracies such as that of Kunama, Saho, etc. they are in the same condition, that is, in the path of extension. This helps us to say that Bahta Hegos and Ras Alula are both Abyssinians but with different backgrounds, and values i.e. Bahta Hegos had a democratic background and values while the Ras the opposite. This is also true when comparing the background and value of those who fight for justice in Eritrea today with that Eritrean dictator Isaias Afwerki.

I am a writer (in Tigrinya) of the biography of Bahta Hego. Bahta, was born to many in Segeneiti, and to a few in nearby Addegefom village, Zenadegle, Ekeleguzai, Eritrea in 1840. At an early age he resisted the injustices created by King Yohannes IV and his generals like Ras Alula in Segeniti in October 1875. This is nothing new because the abuse of basic human rights by the Ethiopian ruling class and the resistance of the people is something that has existed since they claimed.

Bahta led group of peasant fighters, for their necessary security, soon left Ekeleguzai and migrated north to make Naqfa and its environs their stronghold. And after the death of King Yohannes on March 10, 1889, and the fall of northern Ethiopia into the hands of Italy and the formation of Eritrea, an agreement arose between Bahta and the Italian colony that Bahta rules Ekeleguzai with the title of 'degiat' on behalf of the Italian colony. Then, democratic Ekeleguzai's reaction was "we do not recognize any title that has not been given by us and for us". But measuring the bad time they were in, they made a secret deal. The secret agreement resulted in Ekeleguzai being well organized, united and carrying on the army's fight against the colony in a way that shocked the colony.

That's right, Segeniti overnight turned into a big city thanks to the barefoot peasant fighters who gave the right answer to the call of Bahta Hegos. Bahta, with reason not well achieved, changed his military strategy instead of attacking Mendfera fortress, he attempted to attack Halai fortresses. There he was murdered. This black day took place on December 18, 1894. This was followed by two battles, at Qoatit/ኩግጥጥ on 13-15 January 1895 and at Senafe on the 16th of the same month and year. This army was the united front of Eritrea and Tigray. And it was this army that was at the forefront of the Battle of Adwa on March 1, 1896.

Did Akeleguzay share her secret preparation for the war against the Italian colony with King Menelik, Mengesha Yohannes, etc? In short, Rasi Mengesha was well informed and Ras Welie/ወለ, among those

most trusted by Menelik. And if the generals are well informed, I don't see why their boss, i.e. the King, couldn't be.

My tweet of 23.2.2023

What was the role of the Eritreans in the battle of Adwa? King Menelik once said 'ከሺ አማራ ይበልጣል አንድ አበራ'. What does this Testify? Abera, my book calls him an Eritrean eagle, he was a son, but for others a grandson, of Degiat Hailu of Tseazega. # The Eritreans were at the forefront of the battle. In addition to the movement of Abera and his companions, there was almost the entire resistance force of Ekkeleguzai, after the death of Bahta Hegos, led by Sengal Hegos. And General Baratieri Oreste miraculously escaped their ambush in his flight to Massawa. For father and better please read the history book written by Angelo del Boca and Memorias del General Baratieri: Campaña Italiana en Africa (1892-1896). Menelik seeing that the Italians were in a bad position passed and ordered Sengal Hegos' lead unit to stop following him and turn back. To tell the truth, Menelik was not there to expel the Italian colony that had brought him to power but to weaken the Tigriyna-speaking community. Worse still he put all the escaped Eritrean prisoners from Nockra behind the bars of his prison which was in Harar. So, I would like to leave to the reader the reflection on what King Menelik is for the Eritreans.

All together on the role of Eritrans who is always at the forefront, thanks to men like Bahta Hegos, Abera Hailu, Mahrai Mogs, Sengal Hagos, Abraha Deboch, Moges Asgodom, Zerai Deres, etc. who fought and died not only in the land of Abyssinia but also in Europe in the heart of Rome, Italy is hitherto unmatched/ ከሳዕ ሎሚ ብዙይ ትክክል ነገት.

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 - (3) Giovanni (P. Luca) Barzano, Valore e Diritto della Prole negli statuti Consuetudinari dell'Altipiano Eritreo, Editrice: Francescana, Asmara, 1979, p. 33
 - (4) Henry Neville Hutchinson, John Walter Gregory, Richard Lydekker, The Living Races of Mankind, Vol. II, with 309 illustrations, Mittal publication (India), 1985, p. 374.
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 2. George F. Black, Ethiopica and Amharica, A List of Works in the New York Public Library, New York, The New York Public Library, 1928, p. 5-6.
 3. L'Ullendorff pone la prima immigrazione Sud-Arabia di stirpi Habasciat ed Ag'azan al primo millennio Cristo, cf. E. ULLENDORFF, op, cit., p. 46. //The Ullendorff laid the first South-Saudi immigration of races Habasciat and Ag'azan the first millennium BC, cf. E. Ullendorff, op cit., P. 46.
 4. Altre stirpi che invasero il paese sono quelle dei Bega dal nord nel secolo VIII d.C. circa, degli Agäw nel secolo X circa d. C., dei Cewa, coloni (militari) installatisi in Eritrea nel XV secolo.// Other lineages that invaded the country are those of Bega from the north in the eighth century A.D. about, of Agaw in the century X around d. C., of Cewa, settlers (military) who settled in Eritrea in the fifteenth century.
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Demographics of Eritrea
 From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

