

CALL ME BY MY NAME: Solutions with Debteraw, XXII  
Wolde Tewolde alias Obo Arada Shawl

January 13, 2008

***EPRP believes that when the time comes, the youth will come or inquire about EPRP.  
One such inquiry has come from the following individual.*** Here is what he wrote.

Dear Wolde Tewolde,

First of all I would like to appreciate your Reflection on split in the leadership of the famous EPRP. I am only 26 and I know this party only in History (through personal readings in the political History of Ethiopia), I am still interested to know More about its programs and directions of struggle. Yes, your recent article has helped me more. Yet I am still confused in some spots:

1. Out of the seven programs of EPRP you mentioned one As "the peasant should be armed". What does it mean? And what is the justification for arming the Peasants?

2. In explaining the collective leadership of the Party you have mentioned three layers - Organizational, political and ideological.

I would be very thankful if you could still help me as to these layers What exactly are they? And what is the practical implication to The democratic principles the party is supposed to Have as a value?

3. I agree personality and firm leadership are pivotal Elements for any form of struggle. Some persons have More than others in terms of their significance and Role in the party. Nevertheless, I do not agree with Your idea that "Debteraw's CULTURE AND FAITH is Calling us for an action. Let us free him to free Ethiopia." because he may be free when Ethiopia is Free. Don't you think in this way? If not, I beg You to warrant your claim.

Thank you so much.

I wish you all the best

ARBUSE A (nickname)

The above is an email from a young reader and since I believe that it is common but a fundamental question, it should be answered in an honest way. In order to assist readers, I deemed it necessary to post the programs and conclusions of the previous article, [Call me by my name: a commentary on EPRP's split, XXI](#)

### **EPRP'S DECLARED PROGRAMS**

1. Replacement of the military by the provisional popular government
2. Recognition of basic democratic rights
3. Political prisoners should be released
4. Eritrean question must be resolved peacefully and democratically
5. Peasants must be armed
6. Economic demands must be fulfilled and
7. Ethiopia must be free from foreign domination

### **EPRP'S DECLARED CONCLUSION**

Only a popular and democratic government could give Ethiopians and Eritreans a chance to unite and survive. That had been the goal of the popular movement, which was betrayed by the intervention of the military. The soldiers did not relinquish power as they have initially promised (see "confession" a book in Amharic written by Tesfaye Lema).

Woyane did not hand over power to the elected Kinjit groups. And there is no guarantee that from now on, that EPRDF will hand over if they loose in the coming elections.

Power of the people comes only if and when the seven points in the declared programs presented by EPRP comes to fruition. Although these were written and demanded a long time ago, these declared programs are still valid, after all DEMOCRACIA – the organ of EPRP warned us all by writing in its first issue ALEBABSEW BIYARSU BE'AREM YIMELSU – what goes around will come around.

**MY RESPONSE:** 3 points of clarification for all young adults of Ethiopia and Eritrea

1. **Peasants should be armed**, as asked by Arhuse A. should be answered in conjunction with the 2<sup>nd</sup> question i.e. recognition of democratic rights and the 4<sup>th</sup> question i.e. the Eritrean question must be resolved peacefully and democratically.

*The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> questions/demands*

The second demand is a very crucial issue for a lot of Ethiopian intellectuals.

The issue of Eritrea was taken as solvable by "peaceful and democratic" means. What does democratic mean, anyway?

In the language of EPRP it means that the MEANS justifies the ENDS unlike EPLF's, TPLF's and many others who follow the Machiavellian principle YETM F'CHEW DuKqtun Amchew equivalent to the END justifies the MEANS.

Saying it differently, there is a huge difference between “might is right versus right is might”.

EPLO’s struggle started with ‘ might is right’ background  
EPRP’s struggle was based on the concept of ‘right is might’. In order to put things more clearly, EPRP’s 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> political demands coincides with the Bill of Rights of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of the USA.

The Bill of Rights is the first ten amendments to the United States Constitution. Among the enumerated rights are those that guarantee

- Freedom of Speech, Press and Religion;
- The People’s right to keep and bear arms

The right to bear arms refers to the concept that individuals and/or governments have a right to weapons. Mostly this right is often presented in the context of military service and the broader right of self-defense. In USA, the term “bear arms” is a matter of recent dispute and continuing political debate.

#### Armed Struggle versus peasants should be armed

By the time EPLO, the precursor of EPRP was launched, the struggle for “right is might” was no more accepted. On the one hand, the nationalists, ethnicists and progressives stand on one side of the equation “might is right.” It was proper to take arms against the Monarchy, the Nobility and the Church who refused to change the status quo of oppression and exploitation, but when the collapse of the Monarchy was imminent to collapse and the Eway Revolution was set in motion, the slogan of EPRP became “right is might” was reverted to its natural place as a priority calling itself as DEMOCRACIA – in name and in substance.

It is obvious that EPRP has continued to defend itself by any means necessary including and up to armed struggle, as the DERG and its cohorts declared that their government would embrace all the demands of EPRP except the first demand which asks for a provisional popular government. EPRP challenged the DERG in written form explaining as follows: “There is no way that 120,000 members, will bring an iota of positive change to Ethiopia let alone 120.”With this belief EPRP defended its political position and worked for the demise of the military regime.

And so EPRP continued to educate the peasants and to defend itself unabated until the TPLF possibly with the blessing of EPLF and the Sudanese government launched an offensive campaign to destroy EPRP’s nucleus army when they marched into Addis Ababa in 1991. It is to be noted that EPRA was not a fighting army. It was supposed to be a Revolutionary army “AN’Qi”- a liberator of the mind of Ethiopians and Eritreans.

Once the Eway Revolution was set in motion, ‘might as right’ was over. EPRP has demanded to the Ethiopian and Eritrean fighters to follow the concept of ‘right is might’ and it is still continues to this day.

Zeru and Berhane- long time comrades were for the armed struggle. Berhane despite his intellectual capacity and preparation to be Che Guevara of Ethiopia was captured in a cave. I have met his captor and it seems to me that true to Che Guevara's betrayal by his own people, it was similar to Berhane Redda's moment of capture. Zeru Kihshen died without speaking out his thoughts or admitting his mistakes. Zeru was instrumental in recruiting young adults from the United States of America to go to the war zones at home while Berhane had led the EPLO into Assimba Mountain in order to start the Long March that is still ONGOING by Debteraw and his comrades.

The idea of right is might or the means justifies the ends comes mainly by Walleigne and Debteraw Tsegaye. Unlike the false pretense by the TPLF that Walleigne is a war like hero is false and unhistorical. The idea of self-determination including cession was hinged on the means of the Eway Revolution. In our case, the 5<sup>th</sup> program was meant to resist government tyranny especially in Insurrection theory.

Of all the things that EPRP has been condemned for is the use and the abuse of Ethiopian and Eritrean youth. Actually this accusation does not normally come from the once upon a time youth or the current youth of Ethiopia themselves. Most of the allegations emanates from outsiders who have no knowledge of EPRP's style of workings or from those who deliberately wants to distort the facts in order discourage the youth from joining EPRP. I have experienced this with my own daughter.

Actually, EPRP does not encourage the youth to join any political Party until they feel comfortable to do so. The old generation of EPRP has to take the responsibility of explaining why the E-way revolution was necessary and correct. I believe this recruitment policy is the best of all policies carried out by EPRP.

## **2. The three layers of EPRP leadership**

Political, Organizational and Ideological (POI)

PAC = party + army+ community

The nature of a political organization of EPLO was described as

*“An organization with a minimum political organization to distinguish it from a military organization such as the ELF, and to emphasize the importance of its political role.”*

Kiflu continued to write

*“ This characterization was based on the assumption that the revolutionary activists who emerged out of the student movement, with the necessary tools and guidance, would be able to provide leadership to the struggle. ‘This therefore means that there must be just enough number of revolutionary cadres who are **ideologically clear, politically mature and organizationally trained**... before the People's War is launched’”(Kiflu: *The Generation P: 80 emphasis is mine*)*

On collective leadership Kiflu wrote “ Berhane, the current General Secretary of the organization, was not comfortable with the changes made. In one of the central committee meetings, he stated that since he was elected by the 1<sup>st</sup> congress, he would hand over his post only to another congress. The CC ignored the personal aspects of the

issue and focused only on structural changes that it felt were obstacles to the internal democracy of an organization.”(Kiflue: The Generation P: 237)

The point I am trying to tell is how democracy works within the members of EPRP and to indicate only the bare elements of complex issues of politics, ideology and organization. It was not simple and it is not going to be either. The following relationships were not rhetorical and shallow but persuasive. EPRP’s fountain is the youth as the old will leave footprint, but we should remember that the old is not going to give up what they have built for nothing. There should not be confrontation when handing over the legacy of its work to the youth. What is my name? Call me by my name. Respect and Trust is my name.

### **Political Leadership (current plus past)**

Students’ and professional associations with many civic and business communities

Labaders’ : Mother

Teachers’ : Berhanu Ijigu

Workers : Marcos Hagos

Youth: Tito Hiruy (Babile)

Professionals: Wogofa

*Organs*: websites, pal talks, radios, TVs and publications

### **Organizational Leadership**

Current: Fassika Bellette

Past: Kiflu Tadesse

Organ: DEMOCRACIA

### ***Ideological leadership***

Current: Iyassou Alemayehu

Past: Tesfaye Debessai

Organ: Red star

### **The Army of EPRP**

**B** and **M** member of a nucleus army died and were kept secret because EPRP was still on a journey. The Trust of sacrifice is still intact within the IFs. What if (Iyasou and Fassika become dictators? What if the Ifs become rich? What about the ifs surrender their principles? What about if they suddenly run their personal lives? Is it reason enough to betray the party of Debteraw Tsegey especially when he is held incommunicado?

Mersha Yoseph was wounded in the Marathon struggle of EPRP and I believe figuratively he is still in the leadership of the army that would fight the TPLF until justice and democracy prevails.

The implications of all these is that EPRP was not based not only in name, organizational structure but also in motion, time and space laden with principles and core values for Ethiopia. EPRP has no other name with or without adjectives other than its own name with its management and leadership intact.

### **3. Debteraw's culture and faith is calling us for an action. Let us free him to free Ethiopia**

So far, as I have been describing Debteraw Tsegaye as a role model for REVOLUTION, EDUCATION, ART and Democracy (READ) in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Let me give you some hints as why Debteraw's implication is vital

- Debteraw strongly believed in the culture of **unity in diversity of Ethiopia** via DEMOCRACIA
- Debteraw strongly believed in the viability of modern and traditional education
- Debteraw inspired hundreds of thousands to believe in the Ethiopian KINET (art)
- Debteraw is languishing in prison in order to promote justice for all for all Ethiopians regardless of nationalities, ethnicities or ideologies and
- Debteraw is a well-known Ethiopian scholar who believed in VIVE LA DIFFERANCE in religion, in social, economic and political reconstruction known as the Eway Revolution.

When I write about Debteraw's reflection in CULTURE as in FAITH, they were not empty words and phrases they are real and natural.

I don't advise anybody to see the party of EPRP with a perspective of individual personalities. There were hundreds of intelligent and some with gifted minds but failed because of lack of experience. EPRP should be seen in wholeness. I know that Kiflu Tadesse has used not only individual personalities but also used their ethnic background as if it mattered to EPRP's organizational structure. His way of writing or labeling even to his own personality was not appreciated. It was wrong to put it that way and it was disservice to EPRP's policy.

Finally let me give you an example why I say Debteraw's freedom will free all Ethiopians and Eritreans. Debteraw is one of the TS'EN'HATE MUHUR AKAL, which means that he has the concept, the theory and the application and for that many intellectuals in Haile Sellassie University did not like him as he used to challenge them to think conceptually, theoretically and practically. A clear example would be professor Mesfin W. Mariam. When Mesfin Wolde Mariam became a Human Rights chairman, and while he was touring the Netherlands, he was approached by a certain individual and asked him as to what had happened to Debteraw's whereabouts. The professor replied that he did not know anybody by Debteraw Tsegaye G. Medhin. It was an act of revenge pure and simple. Can we say that Ethiopia will be free if our professors and doctors do not dare to protect individuals regardless of their personal grudge? That bothers me very much especially when somebody in authority or power replies in this manner. Does this bother young adults? Please, comment.

Can we be our individual selves without fear or apology to witness that the culture and faith of Debteraw will free us all?

For comments and critic  
[woldetewolde@yahoo.com](mailto:woldetewolde@yahoo.com)