

Who are patriots and what is patriotism?

By Qemeru Dessalegn

We, Ethiopians are celebrating the 117TH years of Adiwa victory over the Italian fascist colonial invasion war. It is this day and forever, we Ethiopians should and must remembering our brave forefathers known or unknown Ethiopians-like Menelik II, Tseayitu, Tewedros, Alulla, Yohannes, Ras Mulugeta, Dej. Afework, Abune Petros, Balcha,...etc, we have to honor the sacrifice of those who worked procures the freedom we have. One hundred seventeen years ago the cause was born and truly magnificent took place. The courage, faith fearfully and anxiously, came together in agreement upon one complex yet very fundamental idea, freedom. That was the responsibility in the hearts and from learned minds and grace from God to guide them the commitment of unity and the execution of brave actions toward self-determination.

The intention to be free was set in notion by some of the most courageous men and women who stood resolute in their unity and commitment to act. These ingredients unity “kitet” and commitment, despite overwhelming fear and potential suffering is what makes those who won the freedom, worthy of our greatest respect on this and freedom patriots day. Kitet was organized and led by the famous king Menelik II with his brave follower patriots of freedom and country lovers. We are always graceful in patriotic regalia. Patriotism is a formation of our organization to Ethiopian movement against the invaders. The loyalty and faith that nationalist prize facilitate unity and provide the forefathers value so highly, and called it “KITET” to sacrifice; it calls on the sense of belonging to a large whole. That was the patriotism that inspired the forefathers against the Italian invaders and that was the patriotism all Ethiopians came out of solidarity and shared the burden and freedom. We honored that sacrifice each and every year and in all generations.

The original Ethiopian patriots 117 years ago were those Kitet individuals brave enough to resist with force aggressive and oppressive power of colonial Italian invades. This is that definition of patriotism as that effort to resist the unmatched aggressive invader. The true patriot is motivated by a sense of responsibility and self-interest for himself/herself, family and the future of his/her country to resist invaders or abuse of power.

Surely, we can arrive at a definition of patriotism and freedom that, however rough and imperfect, captures the best of Ethiopia’s common spirit-Ethiopiawinet (Ethiopians) one strong nation. For me, as most Ethiopians, freedom and patriotism start as a gut instinct, a loyalty and love for the country rooted in our history and the earliest told memories the way the Ethiopian ideal wove its way throughout the lessons my family taught me as a child. Patriotism is die or sacrifice for freedom of a country. Patriotism is always more than just loyalty to a place on a

map, a piece of land, or a certain kind of people. It is not just the collection of Mountain, rivers, valleys or forest. Instead it is also loyalty to Ethiopia's ideals freedom, Ethiopiawent, oneness. It is the heritage of our dreams, aspiration of cultures, traditions and our great religions (Christianity, Islam...etc.). We love Ethiopia because; it is the center of our hopes, future land and generation dreams.

Patriotism is an active virtue. The real love urges a person to do everything in his power for the welfare of his country. It makes him perform his duties honestly and devotedly. Patriotism makes him a good citizen, who is always ready to serve his nation with best of his able talent and to give sacrifice for his country and nation. It is a sacred passion that makes the nation strong and honorable. It is our duty to continue this passion alive in our heart. The great war of the Ethiopian against fascist Italian was won only because of the extreme sense of Ethiopian patriotism, Ethiopiawent. Our hero citizens keep a high and a positive sense of patriotism.

When it comes country, like Ethiopia, We must keep our personal interest behind and must give supreme important to the demands of our freedom. It is the loyalty to Ethiopia's ideals-ideals, Ethiopiawent for which anyone can sacrifice or defend, or give their last full measure of devotion. I believe it is this loyalty that allows a country teeming with different language based ethnicities, religions and customs to come together as one. It is the application of these ideals Ethiopiawenet that separate us from Woyane Mafia/TPLF where the opposition party and their supporters have been silently hunted, tortured, and killed, where ten thousands of continue to struggle for basic food and shelter, where despite the heroic the courage of many ordinary people efforts, limited cooperation between various factions remain for too elusive. I believe those woyane who attack Ethiopia's flaws without acknowledging the singular greatness of our ideals-Ethiopiawent and their proven capacity to inspire a better country, do not truly understand Ethiopia.

Ethiopian patriotism is supporting country all the time and government when it deserves it. Stand up for ideals, these are many times in our history when that are out of alignment with our ideals, then the dissent of ordinary Ethiopians may prove to be one the truest expressions of patriotism. We have to live up to the meaning of our creed freedom- a patriot.

I came to understand that our freedom was waged for the sake of that belief equal and perfect that would be by the eyes of the laws and that we could be free to say what we want and assemble with whomever we want and worship as we please; that we could have the right to pursue our individual dreams, but the obligation to help our fellow citizens pursue theirs.

A patriot, he/she, who is recognizing a wrong being committed in this country's name; insisting that we deliver on the promise of our freedom, these are the acts of patriots, men and women who are defending that which is best in Ethiopia. I believe that patriotism must; if it is to mean

anything, involve the willing to sacrifice to give up something we value on behalf of a larger cause. For those who have fought under the flag of this nation, for the young who have endured physical torment in service to our, no further proof of such sacrifice is necessary. Are you living in the Ethiopia that your forefathers fought for freedom for you? The answer is on you.

The calls to action within the definition of patriotism are simple; support, love, and defend your country. We must, all of us decide what it means and how to best act upon it. You, I, siblings, friends, and so on just like our forefathers “Kitet”; we must all decide for ourselves what patriotism really is and how to act upon it and for the extension of rights to others. He/she is a patriot recognizing a wrong being committed in his or her country’s name, insisting that we deliver on the promise of our freedom –these are the acts of patriots, men and women who are defending that, which is best in Ethiopia like Dr. Asrat Woldeyes, Yenesew Gebre, Abebe Gellaw ..etc in the present time. We remember and honor, respect and appreciation of those great souls who gave freedom set example &to our great nation Ethiopia- Ethiopiawinet and now and forever.

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