

What is wrong with us?

The bulk of the following contribution was written some 4 years back. Things have gone even worse than anticipated.

ETHIOPIA without political prisoners remains still a dream beyond reach; more and more political opponents, alas, even including religious leaders and believers are suffering and languishing behind bars, in the hands of the regional-nationalist regime, under a pseudo-legal pretext of “terrorism”.

Indeed, the situation is more depressing than ever. After the death of the dictator (“the rule & the decree of one man”), as a matter of fact, Ethiopia is de facto even just “working” by the “rule of the habit”- due to the long historical solidity of the state (the validity of the state in the mind of every common citizen, so far at least) rather than a leadership, i.e. a functioning political class of a functioning state! We may presume, - we are marching at a rapid speed towards the big crisis of the Ethiopian state. –Political as well as economic and social/ethnic. The spiritual state of every mind /citizen and the social collective is a testimony of our condition. Like for instance, the state of the big indigenous religions – to put it short - the state of “the church” and “the mosque” today and how the “secular state” treats them tells volumes ... In a word every social process is taking a disastrous path with any dramatic turn being possible; " Keditu wede matu" ከድገት ወደ ማጠፊያ/8/ as the Amharic saying goes! Under these conditions, could we really rule out that Ethiopia would indeed “qualify” for the list of the “failed states” as the prognosis goes today and as anticipated centuries ago by colonial forces long before the formation of the modern Ethiopian state!

YES! The worst may be around the corner! “*yewenz wiha yemiwesdew iyasasake new*” የወንዝ ውሃ እያሳሳቀ ነው፣ የሚወስደው! **We are at a point where every mind has to make a pause and REFLECT; Reflect, reflect & reflect more and more to come to “the peace of the mind “so that our social fabric could resurrect and work!**

Just as a case in point, look at these two disasters

<http://www.goolgule.com/save-tigist-gebre/>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=W32z928rkd#! ... **and resume....**

What is wrong with us?

“Such an abrupt change of life encourages thinking about the next stage. I was pleased when I developed a kind of three-point plan that gives me direction. Now I ask myself, when I’m doing something in my work: Is it relating to point one? Is it relating to point two? Is it relating to point three? If it’s not relating to any of those, then I’m wasting my time.”

(FRANK WILCZEK, Nobel Prize in Physics (2004)/1a

A Point of Concern for Reflection

Decades are gone, regimes have changed but there is no progress in the democratic process of the Ethiopian Community.

Normally when ideologies fail, organizations crumble, unless there is some "primordial" disposition holding them together, affiliated through a "communion of fate"/Schicksalsgemeinschaft/ based either on a camouflaged ulterior (teleological) purpose emanating out of some "faith and philosophy" with an objective of a certain totalitarian system or a similar political substance with a "nationalist" colour or even an apparent pseudo-aristocratic new ideological model. The former Eastern Bloc (or North Africa during the 2011 Arab Spring) is still a living example how actually ideologically devoid organizations and parties crumble, though some are again reviving anew or restructured with similar old or new political objectives.

Why is thus, the political-organizational (including the leaderships) metamorphosis in Ethiopia rather insignificant during the last decades, in spite of a tremendous global ideological shift? Given the simple political contours which would be relevant, it is beyond common sense to explain the never ending sectionalism and divisive propensity of the active Ethiopian polity. Is it only something of that Phenomena like "the false dasein" / "non-authenticity"/2b/ at the individual leadership level? Or more? What is it that hinders our political development from taking the path of some new African States, like South Africa or today Ghana etc. or even Zimbabwe's opposition? Given the academic sufficient high level standard of their various leaderships, the ethnic diversity etc. in Ethiopia is not a strong argument. Religion, Ideology and/or social-psychology at the individual level are all relevant but perhaps not fundamental, since otherwise the significant political demarcations would have run along these lines and we could have experienced a new organizational political stability. The political stratification of the Ethiopian Elite is as simple as in any other modern political landscape with similar political development of the last decades. However, without going to details; be it the

political spectrum with leftist legacy or a social-democratic content or those with classical conservative values, the political organizational outcome does not run in accordance with the possible political content. WHY? As unhappy, unaware or even as a victim of the "political imperative" as they could be, are most of the minds buried in the onto-historical nature of power (in its ugliest mod-us) and have lost their capacity for reflection?

Just to initiate, a bit of a reflection here; Hannah Arendt's explanation of totalitarianism is a strong discourse. Her position, that the people promoting fascism and racist ideology are not beasts or wild humans but the same men and women like every one of us; and the big phenomena which makes the difference (irrespective of to which "camp" they belong) is their "GEDANKENLOSIGKEIT"/ thought-/mindlessness, the incapacity to think, i.e. Moments of history when men and women lose their capacity to think; or submit to authorities due to primitive existential reasons, is highly persuasive. Without falling victim to Descartes' dualism, I am sure of the fact that, the moment one stops thinking everything is possible.

In other words, „*I AM BECAUSE I THINK*“ is as valid as / "Cogito, ergo sum"/ ... "*I think therefore I am*". AND NOT "*I am because I belong to this or that community, that blood or soil*". "*I am because I think*" and therefore under normal circumstances "I go there to where what I think" -my IDEA - is sufficiently represented i.e. to where I THINK and AM, and not blindly to where my "blood or soil" leads me.

Communities, nations or states, circumscribed by one or a diversity of cultures with their corresponding arch-types, are products (projects) of the Conscious – the collective Conscious - the collective intelligence - the sum total of the thinking individuals - the conscious individuals, with a sense of (historical -) pragmatism to make their common survival - *their minute and short natural existence in space and time*- somewhat convenient. That means, if these individuals are not subjects with the necessary capacity to THINK, the state and community may be along a disastrous path and everything is possible. (Look at the Bill against NGOs, and the so-called Ethiopian "anti-terrorism bill"; what are they indicating?) AND what is all this fuss about, for such a tiny "interlude" between Eternities of no time; NO TIME whatever that could be, if there is not a more fundamental dogmatized belief cemented in the activist minds/subjects? I don't think it's just "material" and "economic". If I were a "pentekost-protestant" or a priest I would have simply said "Yeza yekeisi - yesaitan sira" የዛ የከይሲ/ የሰይጣን ሥራ/ a devil's project and dismiss all other reflections. How can IT, the "primordial" fundamental dogmatized belief

cemented in the activist minds/subjects, be shattered? -Social evolution through generations with all its consequences in between? -Through an arduous appropriate education (political or more) and/or experience (phenomenological or not)? What then? Armed social revolution! Didn't we see all through our century enough of the minds, which come out of the barrel of the gun? Or counter to enlightenment back to a new or old aristocratic rule full of obscurity or a totalitarian rule of the "left" or "right", colored with different ethno-religious flags (aware or not) at the service and merit or as a victim of external power relations?

Where is the Ethiopian renaissance? -The Philosophy of enlightenment etc. ?

Where is the "Emperor of the MIND", who could see and feel across the cross-section of the minds of the whole Ethiopian community? -The Common sense of the State? The State - the common sense of the simple man cumulated to make the "exponential function" of the wise INTELLECTUAL.

How is the Human qualified to be better than the Animal? "*Lemehonu bebeg na besew mehakel yalew liyunet min yihon*"?(ለመሆኑ በበግና በሰው መሃከል ያለው ልዩነት ምን ይሆን /1/? What makes the big or the tiny/DNA/ difference between the animal and the human? The "*flesh and the blood*" or/and the "*soil and the blood*" into which they are born or "***the enlightenment of the mind***". "*Siga we demu weis berhane aymerow*"? ስጋ ወደሙ ወይስ ብርሃነ፡አይምሮው /2/.

If a clever and cunning social survey of all the Ethiopian literate section (or the elite) were made and if they were ready to give an honest reply, what would the outcome be?

"*Sigawe Demu*" ስጋ ወደሙ /3/; The "*flesh and the blood*" in the sense of Christianity's "Love your Enemy"; "*telatihin Wided*" ጠላትህን ውደድ/4/ or

"*Sigawe Demu*" ስጋ ወደሙ; The "*flesh and the blood*" in the sense of "*soil and blood's* "Kill Your enemy"; "*Telatihin gidel*" ጠላትህን ግደል/5/.

-"*Telatihin gidel*" ጠላትህን ግደል like an act of survival in the sense of "*social-Darwinism*", like "*the survival of the fittest*" in an evolutionary process.

As far as the rest of the Ethiopian people are concerned, be sure the vast majority, would only say, "we are glad that you are of the same opinion for a common purpose": "*Inesu ketesmamamu igna min gedon*"! እነሱ ከተስማሙ እኛን ምን ገድን /6/!

If we take the past and the present as an indicator, it won't be difficult to forecast the gloomy perspective, since we have all witnessed in our generation, how the

ruling Ethiopian polity has resolved its differences, be it the old aristocratic, the military or the new regional-nationalist regime. This has been vivid at all the critical summits of power relations. How does, however, the substance and characteristics of the relations of power look like at the level of the last drop, at the level of the simple literate Man-Woman (i.e. the elite)? If we give Foucault's micro analysis of power its due bearings at the matrix of social-power-relations, is the "last Man-Woman" in a way not implicated to the way the ruling section of the elite resolved its differences and social conflicts, all the way through our century?

Have we ever made an inquiry as to how differences and conflicts are resolved at the last drop i.e. at the family level, in our social circles and all other institutions with a social significance including political groups and parties with national relevance or less? Have we ever questioned appropriately our essential attitude and state of mind to these intricate questions of power at the backdrop? Could we honestly expect an essential change to come about - the change of power relations at the top of the power structure; a change, which could redefine all our social relations again, as long as we have not changed in our attitude of our day to day life at the last drop. If we don't dare to change at the last drop, it is not even far-fetched to presume that we are also implicated in the fact that the democratic process in Ethiopia doesn't make any progress. - By the way, the momentum of the highly praised "Obama's Change"(2008), which was all over the globe acclaimed to be a phenomenal event of the decade, is not a miracle from heaven. Though the social and political prerequisites are totally different, *the big point of common significance is the last drop- the last Man, the last Wo-Man, especially the Last (of the elite), who has the power-stuff to convey the message, the Last, who has got to be totally inspired, who has got to live and to fully believe in the change to come.*

Thus, the essential point remains:

What is wrong with us?! Where is the Ethiopian renaissance?

As an enlightened section of the Ethiopian people, would the WHOLE Ethiopian Polity ever opt for Enlightenment, for "Berhane-Aymero" ብርሃነ፡አይምሮ /7/ or if you like in a Christian parlance, for "Sigawe demu" ስጋ ወደሙ /3/ in the sense of genuine Christianity's "telatihin wided" ጠላትህን ውደድ/4/ to resolve and contain its differences through a genuine democratic process? Of course, it goes without saying that "telatihin-wided" ጠላትህን ውደድ does not suggest, "To go to bed with the enemy", but it has a simple philosophical significance that the Whole constitutes itself out of its contending forces. Life is only a game out of contending forces and it can't be maintained if these forces are not ready to accept and comply with their reciprocal indispensability. Life is a nice game. But no child would tumble on a

trampoline if the circumscribing moments and vectors of the plane fail. However, why is this simple fact not apparent to all of us? The simple fact of **“DARING TO KNOW”** this! *The simple fact of surviving together!* Why is it so difficult? What is wrong with us? What makes us blind to the Enlightenment of the MAN and the WO-MAN, realized elsewhere in the world, among which, even a lot are in a way late-comers than Ethiopia to cultural civilization? *What keeps us away from using our own mind "without guidance from another”?*

What hinders us from daring to know/SAPERE AUDE / (cf. Kant)

the quintessence of a social harmony to witness a sufficient life or if you like, even a harmonious LIFE full of Faith and Wisdom? - Irrespective of its color; be it

Like the Yin and Yang
In the Eastern Wisdom,
Like the Son and Father
In the Christian Faith,
Like the Star and the Moon,
In the Sufi mystics,
In the Muslim Belief!

*

In spite of all odds, may democracy in Ethiopia be not a dream but a reality like, say, **GHANA**, our long independence-mate has made it possible?

ASK! Why not in Ethiopia and what is our problem ...?

*Yet, Hope remains a principle....and we may learn a lot from all our odds in the past.... Nonetheless, in order to know”Quo Vadis” ETHIOPIA, the most relevant inquiry is still: --- **“What is wrong with us”?** ---*

1a/ This is not just physics; physics is in a way full of philosophy/

http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/wilczek09/wilczek09_index.html

2a/ "authenticity is the process of becoming one's possibilities"

<http://members.tripod.com/~jonmills/Dasein.htm>

/Amharic, translated:

- 1) What is by the way, the difference between the sheep and the human?
- 2) The flesh and blood or the enlightenment of the mind?
- 3) The flesh and blood
- 4) Love your enemy
- 5) Kill your enemy
- 6) We don't mind if they agree
- 7) Enlightenment of the mind
- 8) From the slippery terrain to the swamps.

What is wrong with us? (Part II)– A little piece of what to do follows

What is wrong with us? (Part II)

(A little piece of what to do!)

A Rationale and Guide for Nonviolence

"... life, from its beginning more than three billion years ago, did not take over the planet by combat but by networking."...Fritjof Capra / <http://www.ecoliteracy.org/essays/new-facts-life>

Revolutions and wars are exceptions to the rule, coup d'états are perversions of the rule...And the rule seems to be evolution embedded in creativity/emergence, whose existence becomes apparent in due time and space to initiate a fundamental change...That is, I presume, the Kernel of human experience in history.

*

Nonetheless, it has to be noted here that Year 2011 has given us the opportunity to witness that there are good and bad exceptions. EGYPT and the nonviolent youth movement for FREEDOM all over the Arab World and North Africa are testimonies of these good and beautiful phenomena liberating the MIND of every soul! (16.03.2011).

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_evolution
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sociocultural_evolution

**What is the inter-relation between social structure and collective consciousness?
What is the role of structure and collective consciousness in our future human development...?**

*

Following is an aspect which I think is very relevant in our context and helpful for our community's political dead-lock/1/:

**A rationale and guide for nonviolence
as a basis for conscious evolutionary activism. 1/**

Here reproduced in summary, in accordance with the permission of the author:

<http://evolutionaryactivism.com/wagn/Copying>

Chapter Twenty-Two

A rationale and guide for nonviolence as a basis for conscious evolutionary activism.

In any situation or system, seek ways to replace force with consciousness.

...

Force, in this context, refers to the use of coercion or overwhelming strength or power to dominate, control, or otherwise get one's way, often against resistance. The power used can be physical, economic, social, intellectual, emotional, military, psychological, technological, etc. The more force used, the less we take into account the nature or needs of the Other.

The more we take the Other into account, the less force and resources we need to accomplish mutual ends.

Consciousness, the capacity to be aware, in this context, includes all the interior dimensions and capacities of life that can—among other things—help us deal successfully with our changing world by sensing, understanding and creatively, collaboratively relating to the conditions in us and the entities, interactions, and contexts around us.

This evolutionary moment challenges us to bring the power of consciousness to bear on the process of self-reflective evolution itself to replace the creative violence of supernovas, life and- death struggles, and wars with highly aware intelligence, wisdom, and care.

So as evolutionary activists, we seek to replace force everywhere,

- **In every entity** (every individual, group and system);
- **In every interaction** (every conversation, exchange, conflict, and engagement with nature);
- **In every context** (every situation, culture, gathering, community and urban design); and
- **In every form of consciousness** (in all sensing, learning, visioning, morality, and all other forms of thinking, feeling and experience).

.....

Our consciousness then evolves towards true collaboration, where we you and I, us and our adversaries, humankind and nature—help each other get what we each need and want—in cooperatives, family conversations, in deliberative democracy, in Nonviolent Communication, in permaculture.

...

This shift from force to consciousness is the fulcrum of human evolution at this critical time—at individual, collective, and systemic scales.

As we reach our planetary limits, the downsides of force, violence, and control become increasingly obvious. Our technological and social capacities to generate harm through our efforts to force, impact, and control people and life—no matter how well intended—threaten our extinction.

...

The more fully we understand the less force or energy we need or want to use. The less energy we use to serve any given need, the more efficient and elegant our systems and behaviors become, making them favored by natural selection and the general directionality of evolution.

...

Guidance concerning evolutionary means:

....

- **A addresses the role of conversation.**
- **B talks about creative use of diversity.**
- **C explores how to handle dissonance.**
- **D discusses deep, inclusive simplicity.**

...

Guidance concerning realms of evolutionary action:

...

- **1 deals with the health of the systems themselves.**
- **2 deals with contexts and systemic awareness of them.**
- **3 deals with the systemic capacity to effectively respond to complex, changing circumstances.**

...

1. Cultivate healthy self-organization.

..

- **Cultivate healthy behavior**
- **Cultivate healthy power**
- **Cultivate healthy flow**

...

...

2. Cultivate healthy systemic contexts.

..

- Healthy social context.
- Healthy contexts that govern meaning
- Healthy physical contexts
- Healthy natural contexts

3. Cultivate healthy systemic responsiveness and collective evolvability.

..

- Cultivate collective intelligence, learning, and memory -
- Cultivate collective self-awareness, integrity, and humility -
- Cultivate the collective capacity to generate and pursue shared intentions -
- Cultivate systems that embody collective compassion and mutuality -
- Cultivate the collective ability to make wise, creative decisions -
- Cultivate collective co-creativity and evolutionary sensibilities –

(H.B. 28/02/2013)

1/ This is a section/chapter from Tom Atlee's " book :

"Reflections on Evolutionary Activism"

(Tom Atlee & friends :These are....interesting intellectual and activist circles of our generation...with a lot of new insights and ideas)

http://evolutionaryactivism.com/wagn/Get_involved

More: See if you like:

<http://nonzero.org/reviews.htm>

<http://nonzero.org/index.htm>

http://socio.ch/evo/index_evo.htm