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Bereket Habte Selassie-Head of Eritrea's Quisling League

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Every country has its own "Quisling League" and Eritrea is no different. As a matter of fact, members of Eritrea's Quisling League (EQL), like most other quislings, are motivated by fame and fortune. The most senior member of the group is Bereket Habte Selassie. The EQL is an unlikely alliance of arrogant, condescending, opportunist, pompous, and self-righteous individuals who live off the suffering of others. They have formed a smorgasbord of alphabet groups made up of dubious individuals with sordid records and pasts. They first made their appearances in cyberspace at about the time the Eritrea Ethiopia ceasefire agreement was signed. At that time I labeled them the Ds-as in defeatists, distracters, detractors and disgruntled diplomats and Meles Zenawi's errand boys. Since then, their futile attempts to disassociate themselves from the agendas of the minority regime in Ethiopia and its handlers have proved to be an unsustainable political joke.

While some, like the Eritrean National Alliance (ENA) led by Herui Tedla openly associated with the minority regime in Ethiopia, groups led by Paulos Tesfagiorgis and Bereket Habte Selassie operated clandestinely. The latest meeting in Addis Ababa, led by Meles Zenawi, exposed the quislings for what they are-enemies of the State of Eritrea, its government and its people. The EQL is seasonal and predictable; they make their appearances when their handlers (the mercenary minority regime in Ethiopia and its handlers) are cornered-or find them selves in a self-made political quagmire. Eritreans in the Diaspora are therefore not surprised by the re-emergence of the two elite members of the EQL, Paulos Tesfagiorgis and Bereket Habte Selassie, into the Eritrean political arena after giving us a brief respite.

Both Paulos Tesfagiorgis, who felt the urge to tell us about his travels to Ethiopia, and Bereket Habte Selassie's with his "Urgent Appeal" to Jendayi E. Frazier, the Secretary of State for African Affairs, are back again, sullyng the Eritrean cyberspace with more of their self aggrandizing ramblings. Somehow the Eritrean Diaspora knew they were coming, the ominous stench of their perfidy was once again polluting the Eritrean cyberspace. Today, with his diversionary "Urgent Appeal" to Jendayi E. Frazier, this senile opportunist and repeat offender, is once again attempting to undermine Eritrean officials that he once praised and hailed as the "Maradona and Pele of politics". Dr. Bereket feigns concern by shedding crocodile tears for the people of Eritrea he has long abandoned and whose right to development, a human right, he has worked so hard to thwart. A senile exercise in futility if you ask me!

My article for today will focus on Bereket Habte Selassie, as Paulos Tesfagiorgis' betrayals and crimes against the people of Eritrea are too long and will require its own sitting. When I heard about the letter written by Dr. Bereket, I was hoping against all hopes, that the senile Professor was writing to Jendayi E. Frazier to protest her attempt to violate the Constitutional rights of Eritrean Americans, but not surprisingly, it turns out that he was writing to her to extend the violations to include ALL Eritreans, inside the country and in the Diaspora. This pliant quisling was pleading with her to violate, not just Eritrea's sovereign rights, but also to violate the

people of Eritrea's right to development. Taking his cue from his payors, this mercenary was persuaded to write, not in defense of the Eritrean people, but rather to advance the narrow interests of certain quarters. So much from a "Distinguished Professor" and a constitutional scholar at that!

To Eritreans, Bereket Habte Selassie is not just a greedy mercenary but also an opportunist, known more for his "service" in Ethiopia than anything he has done in Eritrea, despite what he professes in his many writings. All who are familiar with his past know of his penchant for fame and fortune. While his history is replete with betrayals and denials, this article will attempt to show how this selfish individual took advantage of the magnanimity of the Eritrean people. But Dr. Bereket's betrayals are not limited to the people of Eritrea; he has also betrayed the trust of his Ethiopian compatriots. This cyber dictator and his imaginary cyber party have harassed and intimidated Eritreans in the Diaspora for far too long to be left unchallenged. Let us go back and take a glimpse into his dark past.

Although Bereket Habte Selassie has held several high-level positions within the Ethiopian government, including Federal Supreme Court Judge, Vice Minister of Interior and the Mayor of Harar during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie, he is mostly remembered for his role as Co-Chairman of the Inquiry Commission established during Menghistu Hailmariam's brutal "Derg" regime (preceded the current regime led by Meles Zenawi). While serving as Attorney General in Ethiopia during the Emperor's reign, he was also responsible for drafting the clause that enabled Ethiopia's annexation of Eritrea, that triggered the 30-year long armed struggle for Eritrea's independence.

In the early 70s, when Eritrean students in North America and around the world were leaving the comforts of their homes to join their comrades in arms in Eritrea, who were struggling for Eritrea's independence, Bereket Habte Selassie went instead to Ethiopia. He said then that he was responding to "yenat ager tiri"-the call of the motherland. He left his job at the World Bank and returned to Ethiopia where he served as Co-Chairman of the Inquiry Commission. The purpose of the Commission was to investigate alleged corruption and breach of responsibilities by officials in Emperor Haile Selassie's regime in the aftermath of the Ethiopian famines. While the record shows that he was appointed by the Ethiopian parliament, in absentia, to serve in the newly established Inquiry Commission, he says the late General Aman Andom prodded him to return to Ethiopia and serve the Derg regime. We will never know the truth.

On 23 November 1974, Aman Andom, a distinguished military officer of Eritrean descent, was killed in a gunfight in his home for refusing to sign on to a decision to deploy massive forces to crush the Eritrean struggle for independence and also for not approving the extra judicial killings of the individuals being investigated by the Inquiry Commission headed by Dr. Bereket. That same night, 60 members of the Emperor's regime were taken from the wine cellar at the Palace to Akaki prison and machine gunned to death, and their bodies were tossed in freshly dug shallow graves.

Amongst the dead were prominent Ethiopian Ministers, civil servants, and decorated Army officers including Aklilu Habte Wolde who served as Ethiopia's Prime Minister and Rear Admiral Eskindir Desta, the Emperor's grandson. They were all killed extra judicially. Right after the massacres of Aman Andom and the 60 prominent members of the Emperor's government, Bereket Habte Selassie escaped to Eritrea. Unlike the Eritrean Constitution Commission that he has written about ad nauseum, he has remained conspicuously mum about the Inquiry Commission in Ethiopia he was appointed to lead.

Menghistu Hailemeriam in his book implicates Bereket Habte Selassie as being the person who told him to "clear the deck" and remove the former members of the Emperors government. According to the former Ethiopian leader, Dr. Bereket told him that it would advance the new revolution in Ethiopia. Why hasn't the good professor revealed his part in that sad episode in Ethiopia's history? This person who fancies himself as a "human rights" advocate has yet to utter a single word about the extra-judicial executions of the 60 individuals he was investigating for corruption and crimes against Ethiopia. Why is that?

When the entire world is condemning Meles Zenawi's minority regime for the genocides in Gambela, Sidama and Ogaden, when students and unarmed civilians are gunned down in broad day light on the streets of Addis Ababa, and when over 40,000 people are detained in Ethiopia for voting him out of office, this "human rights" advocate remained silent. When Meles Zenawi's forces invaded Somalia and displaced over 500000 people, pulverized village and killed hundreds creating an unparalleled humanitarian disaster in Somalia, this "human rights" advocate remained silent. But for the last 8 years, he has campaigned incessantly to blemish the government and people of Eritrea's record on human rights in Eritrea.

His versions of events in Eritrea during his stay contradict known historical facts. His attempts to present himself as the peacemaker during the 1974 popular mediation between the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) in Eritrea are self-serving, dishonest and grossly exaggerated. Truth be told, his brief stay in Eritrea is riddled with even more intrigues and behaviors bordering on the criminal. The details will have to wait for another day, suffice it to mention that they involve the Eritrean Relief Association (ERA), "embezzlement of funds" and Paulos Tesfagiorgis. Oh! What tangled webs these two weave, when they practice to deceive!

After independence, the magnanimous Government and people of Eritrea gave Dr. Bereket another opportunity to serve his country of origin and redeem himself. He was appointed as the Chairman of the Constitution Commission. Exposing his deceptive nature, in an interview conducted by an enemy website, while discussing appointments in the Eritrean government, the senile professor said:

"...My energies from 1991 onwards were focused on being with my family and on rebuilding my income...I didn't expect it [an appointment] and I wouldn't have accepted it. I have no ambition whatsoever in that regards: that's what I want to make clear to your readers. As a matter of fact, at heart, I am a professional with poetic bent; I hate politics. You just join the fray when the fate of your country is at risk. Seeking public office, etc, no thank you. I am very happy in my professional life. Why would I leave a comfortable life for the misery of being somebody's underling..."

If Dr. Bereket hates politics what is his cyber EDP supposed to be? Is it not a political party? At first, believing it could ride on the coattails of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), this group of disgruntled diplomats and defectors including the runaway reporters sans couth, chose the name EPLF-DP. At some point they changed the name to EDP. We were relieved. The name EPLF cannot be associated with traitors and turncoats. These quislings who could not live up to the ideals and principles of the EPLF, which include self-respect, sacrifice, humility, and service to others, have no business using the name in their cyber smearing campaigns.

When the President of Eritrea appointed him to serve as the Chairman of the Constitution Commission, it must have surprised the good Dr. for he must have known that he did not deserve the honor of being involved in such a historical

national endeavor. Acknowledging the President's magnanimity, Dr. Bereket said "Igzi yekbiro, neai zekbereni", meaning "God respect him for giving me this respect". But the opportunist that he was, he did not want to pass up the once in a lifetime chance to advance his stagnant career and pad both his credentials and his wallet, so he shamelessly accepted. This unconscionable man was not about to pass up the opportunity to fleece the Eritrean people who were re-building their country from scratch after 30 years of war. More on that later...

After 4 years of public debate both inside Eritrea and in the Diaspora, the people of Eritrea produced the Eritrean Constitution. The Eritrean Constitution was ratified in 1997 and since then, much work has been done in its implementation. While he has been harping about the "implementation of the Eritrean Constitution" from his hideaway in North Carolina for the last 10 years, this "Constitutional scholar" has done absolutely nothing to help with the process. I am inclined to believe that he probably has no clue as to what it entails.

There are several articles in the Eritrean Constitution, whose implementations require laws to be written, or have to be regulated by law. The people of Eritrea have been working hard in the writing and promulgating of these laws and more. Instead of helping in the process or giving advise on how to do certain tasks, Bereket Habte Selassie did everything to undermine the Eritrean Constitution and the solemn principles contained therein. Since it is the people's document, he has long forfeited his right to speak about the Eritrean Constitution-the people's document.

Remaining true to his nature, he once again betrayed the trust of the Eritrean people and his peers. In pursuit of his own narrow agendas, and presenting himself as the "Father of Eritrea's Constitution", this Father of the EQL set out to elevate his own stature by undermining others, especially the Government and people of Eritrea. He continues to this day to receive funds for activities related to the Eritrean Constitution-book sales, seminars, workshops, travels, speaking engagements etc. etc. but has never given as much as a penny to the other members of the Commission that did the bulk of the work associated with the writing and producing of the Eritrean Constitution.

In 2001, at the height of his cyber smearing campaign against the people of Eritrea, distinguished former members of the Executive Committee of the Constitutional Commission of Eritrea, wrote him an open letter concerning his antics in the Diaspora and to expose his deceptive and opportunist tenure as the Chairman of the Eritrean Constitution. They asked him three questions that he has evaded to date. I will remind the senile professor the three questions and ask that he take this opportunity to answer the questions posed to him by his peers. Dr. Amare Tekle, Mrs. Amna Hassen Naib, Mr. Musa Hassen Naib, Dr. Seyoum Haregot, Mrs. Zahra Omar Jabir and Mr. Zemehret Yohannes signed the letter. Here is the eloquent letter in its entirety:

"...We, the former members of the Executive Committee of the Constitutional Commission, have taken note of the several self-serving claims made in your recent articles and interviews relative to drafting of the Constitution of Eritrea and its "implementation", as well as certain issues that were discussed during the drafting process.

We had, individually and in discussion with each other, hitherto concluded that it would serve no useful purpose to publicly take exception, either individually or collectively, to your disregard for historical facts and the truth, to respect a hallowed Eritrean imperative that constraints responsible members of society from rash actions or reactions and to keep dignified silence in the face of impropriety by an

errant colleague; in the conviction that history would be a better judge of our deeds and misdeeds and in the belief that truth will sooner or later triumph.

We have, however, been left with no option, in view of your continued molestation of the truth than to speak out for the record and in the interest of the truth. We speak, not in recrimination, but in the hope that, in your future "contribution" to the "democratization" and "well-being" of our country, you will pay heed to the noble tradition of Eritrea. We shall not go into details about what transpired during the long drafting process. At present, we shall refer to three of your egregious pretensions.

1. Authorship of the Draft Constitution

You have repeatedly claimed, directly and indirectly, that you were the sole author of the Draft Constitution, often playing on the word "writing". The word "writing" is defined, inter alia, as (a) the faithful recording on paper of any decisions made, or ideas agreed upon, by a group (i.e. committee, commission, etc.) and (b) drawing up (composition) of a draft text based solely on one's value and belief systems. The first denotes collective authorship and the second individual effort. We then wish to ask you one simple question for posterity. Will you inform Eritreans, in clear unequivocal terms, which one of the above two tasks did you perform? As a corollary, you may also wish to inform the Eritrean public and our foreign friends:

What was taking place in the meetings of the Executive Committee;

What was the Eritrean population, at home and abroad discussing during the constitution-making process, preceding the first draft;

What discussion took place in the Executive Committee concerning the preparation of the first draft;

What draft was communicated to the 50 member Constitutional Council; and

What was the role of the Constitutional Commission Council and the foreign and local Board of Advisors?

In short, we ask you to recall the whole constitution-making process and, with the clear conscience, repeat your claim for sole authorship of the Draft Constitution.

A propos, you have declared that the original Draft of the Constitution was in English. We are aware only of the Tigrigna text. It was in fact for this reason that we requested one of our colleagues to translate it into English. If you had an English text why was it necessary to have the Tigrigna text translated?

2. The Issue of the Special Court

In an essay entitled PFDJ's War on Democracy and Justice (Awate.com, August 13, 2001), you wax indignant and fulminate in connection with the creation by the Government of Eritrea (contrary to what you say, the PFDJ does not have law-making powers) of the Special Court. Let us be honest. As a leading academic, the Chairman of the Constitutional Commission and a constitutional scholar at that, should you not have had the courage of your conviction to be among the first to protest as vehemently and as loudly then as you are doing now, five years after the enactment of the Special Court Proclamation? Or was there an incentive involved?

Let us be more direct. We hope you will recall as we all do that we had serious discussion on the matter both in official capacity and in private. You will recall that,

during one of these meetings, one member raised the need to harmonize or bring into line some provisions of the law establishing the Special Court with the provisions of the Constitution, once it was ratified and becomes effective. Surely, that person was not you. We will be emphatic that, on the other hand, you supported the Government's action and the necessity of such special court with such extraordinary powers in developing countries to combat corruption. We do not mind your present change of heart, if it is rooted in honesty. On the other hand, we take special exception to your present fulmination and pretentious declarations as if you had been criticizing the Proclamation on Special Court all along for the last five years. Your first moral transgression and intellectual dishonesty maybe forgivable; your present immorality can never be. So what were your motives then, and what are your motives now? Surely, it cannot be the national or public interest.

3. A Pro Bono Service?

You have claimed on several occasions that, as Chairman of the Commission, you were rendering a pro bono service i.e. service without any remuneration. Yet, Asmara University records reveal that by arrangements with the University of North Carolina, at Chapel Hill, the University of Asmara was paying you 50 per cent of your salary while you still continued to receive the other 50 per cent from the University of North Carolina. In effect, you were getting your full UNC salary. Moreover, that, upon your persistent supplication to settle your mortgage of USD 28,000 in America in its entirety, as a lump sum, the Government of Eritrea had to arrange for an additional salary of USD 2,500 per month from the Constitutional Commission for three years you served as Chairman of the Commission. This special salary was partly utilized to repay the money the Commission advanced to settle your mortgage in America. Part of this special salary was paid retroactively.

Finally, as you recall, the Constitutional Commission was required to submit a final Report on activities it accomplished and its financial condition in Tigrigna, Arabic and English. The Commission was expected to distribute this Report to the public at large and the donor community, who contributed funds for the operations of the Commission. Some members of the Executive Committee prepared the Tigrigna and Arabic versions. These versions of the final Report were made available to the public at large. You were requested to prepare the English version for distribution to the donor community. To-date, despite repeated pleas, you did not submit the English version. The Commission thus finds itself derelict in its responsibility towards the donor community in Eritrea.

We restrain ourselves from further comments on other equally weighty matters in the public interest. We still believe that each one of us should be and will be judged by history and the future generations of Eritrea..."

So there you have it. I hope the good professor will respond to these serious questions soon instead of engaging in cyber smearing a people and a government who gave him a moment of respect, a moment greater than any he will ever get in his entire lifetime.

Eritreans know that Bereket Habte Selassie is a true blue traitor who suffers from an overdose of ambition and failed expectations, and as an evil individual who has turned his "worship" of Eritrea's leadership and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) into hatred and vengeful betrayals. His fanatical ambitions and expectations and deep-seethed frustrations are reflected by his sordid past. Simply put, Bereket Habte Selassie and Paulos Tesfagiorgis are frustrated individuals who have no qualms about destroying Eritrea, or selling their mothers to get what they want-fame and fortune.

The folks at North Carolina University ought to investigate this man's past and prevent him from poisoning the minds of young students with his distorted version of history and the truth. The State Department and the many policy-making institutions in the United States risk their own credibility and integrity by associating themselves with such notorious quislings, political blackmailers and extortionists.

More on Bereket Habte Selassie, Paulos Tesfagiorgis, and the Berlin 13-a group of self appointed "academicians and professionals next time...

The rule of law must prevail over the law of the jungle!

For Paulos Tesfagiorgis' letter see:

http://selfi-democracy.com/?read=articles/articles/1189452204TENYEARSATER_Aug_07_PDF_e.pdf

For Bereket Habte Selassie's letter, see:

http://selfi-democracy.com/?read=articles/articles/1189582417URGENT0APPEALT_e.htm