

Conference of the Nationalities?

As you may remember my last article on our voice of the voiceless websites was the one about the National Conference. Though, most of the people in the opposition site including the heavy weights do agree on my reservations that I have pointed out by then they disagree with me on why I made it public. The good part is in private we are all in the same page. From the many feed backs that I collected both by e-mail and over the phone I was in a good shape with all my callers and writers and the only difference was my hard steps in making the reservations open; the notion of “kikalah ayneberon”. I some times think I am a wise fool.

I have no idea how many times or for how long should we conceal our dirty truth “kuslis” in dark. I do not know how we have developed and how we can destroy this school of thought about politics is all secretes and that you would only talk about your feelings in private it could be in bars, cafeterias, restaurants or with a group which you believe is very close to you may be in terms of religion, awraja, or ethnicity -- not even with some one in the same organization “wudib”. I always ask myself if we are not willing or ready or able to discuss our problems in table (over our regular meetings of Congress, CC, EC or seminars) why do we therefore need to get together. If all our meetings seem to be finished before the actual setting it could be by phone or by meshawurat (back stage) why we waste time to see each other? IDK.

In any case to make the air clear I was not and I am not and I will never be against a national conference. The only thing if it would be counted as sin could be my public announcement of my worries. And it only originates from my genuine concern to make our national conference friendlier and better. I also recommend those of you who have reservations on my reservation about the national conference to open your eyes and see the 11 pages full document than the one small paragraph of introduction. In fact I do not know why I wrote this much about my previous article it was not my intention to keep you busy this long but as you know I am an Eritrean and we keep on talking once we start -- we only know the saying “Mashelan Zereban..... in theory.

Today the point of my discussion is about our nationalities conference in our nationalities capital “Mekele”. I have put my stand so many times in public with many Medias including Medias stationed in Washington DC (both in Tigrina and Amharic) that I have no problem with ethnic based organizations (actually I used to live with them in EDA “kidan” and we used to like each other and we used to work together) as long as they do not try to force others to do so and as long as it is not borrowed, and as long as it is not assumed to be as a short cut to a given political power. We have seen the latter once when they were joining the 4+1. Of course, if they really feel bad about ethnic based repression in Eritrea they shouldn't have tried to join the 4+1 club.

Let me ask a very simple and common question being raised at present at least in the Diaspora and especially in a country that I am presently living (sorry hiding) the US – the question is why there is a need to organize a nationalities based conference prior to our long awaited national conference? Why we had no conferences for decades and bonanza of conferences at one time?

Though, I have no answer for the above mentioned questions and look forward to hear the answer from the stakeholders, come across the report that we have read together about the nationalities conference in Mekele; it makes me sense something fishy. This attitude of mine did not come from a vacuum as one of our writers said attitude is not a crime too. Some among the many observable facts that made me

think the way I think are: First, why the “astemhiro” was given by the TPLF professor? Second, if we believe or think that we had/have or will have ethnic based problems in Eritrea why we couldn't be able to find some one from us to tell us the need to have ethno-politics as a cure to our contemporary political problems? Third, why we need a guest speaker or external examiner for our private home work? Fourth, doesn't it sound there is no Eritrean to talk about the issue? Fifth, if this is the case doesn't it sense the problem is imported? Sixth, having ethnic based organization for about a decade why we are unable to bring or produce some one to lecture us Ethnicity and Eritrea 101? Doesn't this seem to show the problem doesn't exist at all? No answer again.

According to the conference, one interesting part about the conference was (though the recent correction given about the other participants is vague at least to me) these other participants after being working for it and working on it for a decade they hardly want to integrate “the up to secession” part in their political programs. We have heard them saying some of them “referendum” and others “without limit” instead of “secession”. According to my little common sense and wise fool-ness it shows these groups couldn't resist the pressure of the people “hafash” when it comes to the unity and sovereignty of the country called Eritrea. On the contrary the organizers of the conference told us that nationalities based organizations including Tigrina are flourishing and this is what I mentioned forcing people to follow your route and this is the mania that I abhor the most. Any one has the right to organize the way s/he wants but it gets cheeky when there is a pushing.

Hoping this nationalities footed conference will not have a side effect to the over all national conference process as many thought and not to keep you much reading me in this screen this much for today.

Mussie Zena

zenamg@yahoo.com