

“Golden Words” by martyr and hero Hamid Awate

(In a meeting held by the leader Awate addressing the heroic Eritrean Liberation Army)

"We are all Eritreans and we have to serve our country and people with honesty and sincerity. We are here to achieve a goal, and if there is anybody who has individual ambitions other than the declared objective, then, he must leave now. We all have to show extreme commitment and dedication and carry out the commands and instructions of the leader, no matter how hard they are, for the cause of our country."

As narrated by the fighter Humed Hassen Idris Dohen, who was one of the first generation of fighters and attended the meeting that evening, where Awate addressed the fighters by saying:

"Today we are here to fight the enemy, not only because they humiliated and usurped our land, but to write a proud and honorable history for Eritrea. We are here to challenge the occupation authorities with all their weapons and armies and tell them that we will not accept after this day the life of humiliation and disgrace. We are determined, supported by all the great Eritrean people, to move forward on the path of struggle and martyrdom until liberation ".

The fighter Dohen continues his narration by saying:

Instantly euphoric high sounds were elevated by the fighters who glorified the greatness of Allah and chanted slogans that challenge the invaders. The enthusiasm was intensified and reached its peak and they swore not to never give up or retreat and their motto to be:

"Victory or martyrdom".

The news of Awate going out to the mountains (his rebellion) was a big surprise to the authorities of the Ethiopian occupation, who had never imagined for such a challenge to occur. Therefore, they immediately strived to contain the event by luring Awate by temptation with money and prestige by sending him a letter in this regard by one of the members of Eritrean Parliament. Awate replied by writing a letter in Italian language where he said:

"My rebellion by going to the mountains and raise up arms against Ethiopia is only for the Liberation of Eritrea and not for personal gains or benefits."

The Eritrean Minister of Justice, Omer Hassen Hasano sent a written message to Hamid Awate, who was present at the time in "Algadein" region, asking Hamid Awate to meet him. Hamid replied with a written letter where he clearly rejected the meeting and confirmed his declaration of armed revolution in the following words (and that was on 10 / 9 / 1961):

"If you want to take down the Eritrean flag, I with all those with me, God willing, will raise it up with the force of arms and inform the Eritrean government about that."

The Ethiopian occupation authorities were not in despair from their attempts to persuade Awate to reverse his opinion and to lay down arms and return to his village. Thus, they sent him a large delegation of dignitaries from the region in this regard. His response was decisive when he told the delegation:

"Tell to those who sent you to modify and alter their opinion regarding the occupation of Eritrea. We will not retreat from the goal that the Eritrean people have chosen and announced by declaring the armed struggle. We are not bandits and war amateurs, but we demand freedom and we will endure all the difficulties for the sake to liberate the homeland."

Awate has been honest with the public and was always saying:

"The path of revolution is difficult, long and bumpy and it is flanked by risks and dangers from all sides. But it is the path with guaranteed results to approach the hour of salvation (from Ethiopian occupation)."

Following the victories achieved by the Eritrean Liberation Army in the battle of Adal and Omaal, the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie issued his strict orders to his armed forces in Eritrea to continue committing violence freely (which in practice means to commit crimes freely) in order to suppress the outlaws (the label given by of the emperor to the revolutionaries). To achieve their declared goals, the Ethiopian army mobilized more than one thousand and five hundred soldiers and began to plan to hit the whole region (where the fighters move and are found) from all directions and then gradually narrow the hold and surround the rebels in a narrow area to be able to exterminate them. Awate realized the seriousness of this aggressive plan aimed to quell the flames of revolution in its infancy and for this reasons called a meeting with his fellow fighters, and addressed them by saying:

"You know that our number is small and we do not possess enough weapons fit for use to face the huge enemy forces creeping and targeting to extinguish the flame of revolution and kill the hope of liberation. We must work hard to keep the flame of revolution burning constantly until the full liberation of Eritrea is accomplished. If the flame is extinguished (God forbid) it will be very difficult to re-ignite it in a short time."

"If we want to save our country, regain our honor and attain our goals, we have to pursue one way only and it the path of the armed struggle. Without the armed struggle it's impossible to recover, repossess and regain any of our rights."

"Today the *azzanit* (meaning the rifle) was pronounced and the last link has been cut off between us and the occupier; from today onwards there is no rest or sleep"

"My salute to the brave fighters who summoned all the national will and are competing riding the difficulties and sacrifices for the defense of your country, to give life and independence to your people. I am comfortable and fully confident that your enemy, their agents and spies after this day, cannot extinguish the spark of the Eritrean armed struggle."

“We must fight injustice and oppressors in all possible and various ways?”

“The announcement of armed revolution is not an end in itself, but its continuation is essential to yield the desired result (liberation of Eritrea from Ethiopian occupation).”

In the last moments of his life, martyr Awate took his (abu aashara) riffle with which he sparked the first bullets of revolution and handed it to fighter Kboub Hajjaj and said to:

“Raise this rifle high (continue the armed struggle), until final victory is accomplished, God willing.”

GOLDEN JUBILEE

September 01, 1961 - September 01, 2011

The beginning of the: Eritrean Armed struggle for Liberation and Independence.

Martyr and Hero: HAMID IDRIS AWATE

The “FATHER OF THE ERITREAN ARMED STRUGGLE AND REVOLUTION FOR
FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE”

By: Hamed Idris Awate – FaceBook page (on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Eritrean Revolution)