

ISAYAS AND TPLF

CAUSE & EFFECTS OF HOSTILITY



Part - 2

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Toronto, Canada

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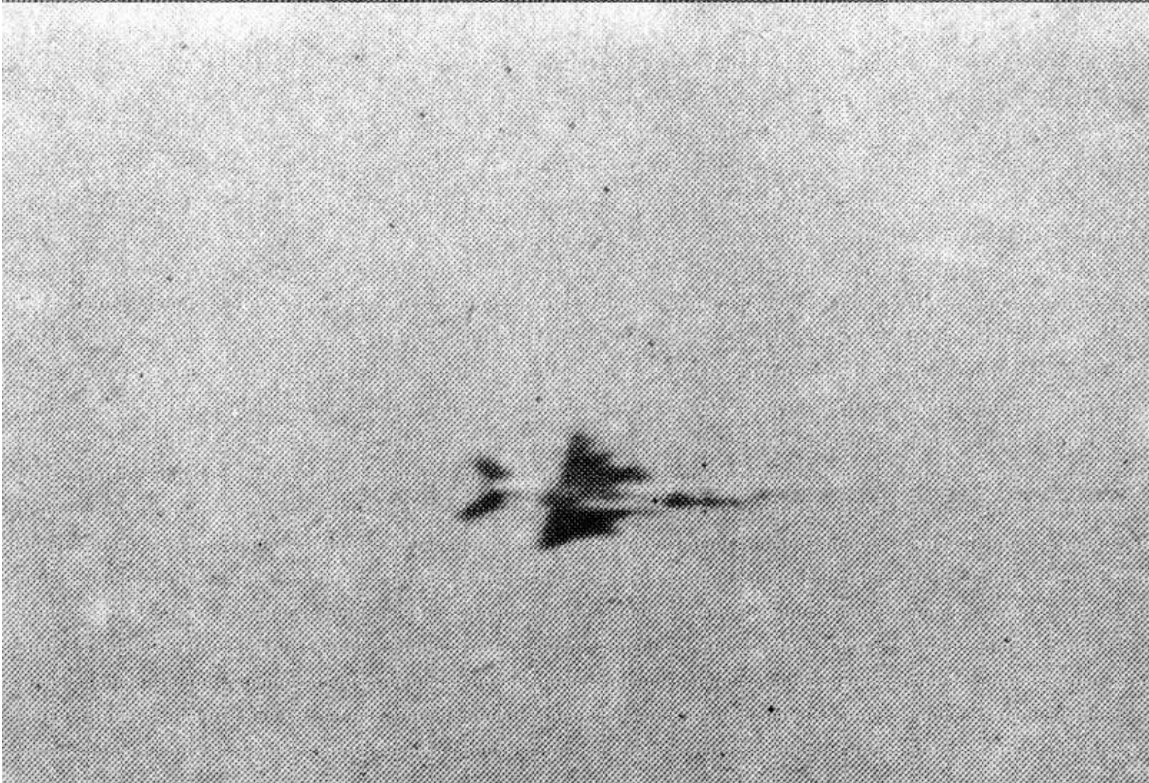


MI-24 GUNSHIP bombing EPLF targets during 6TH Offensive.

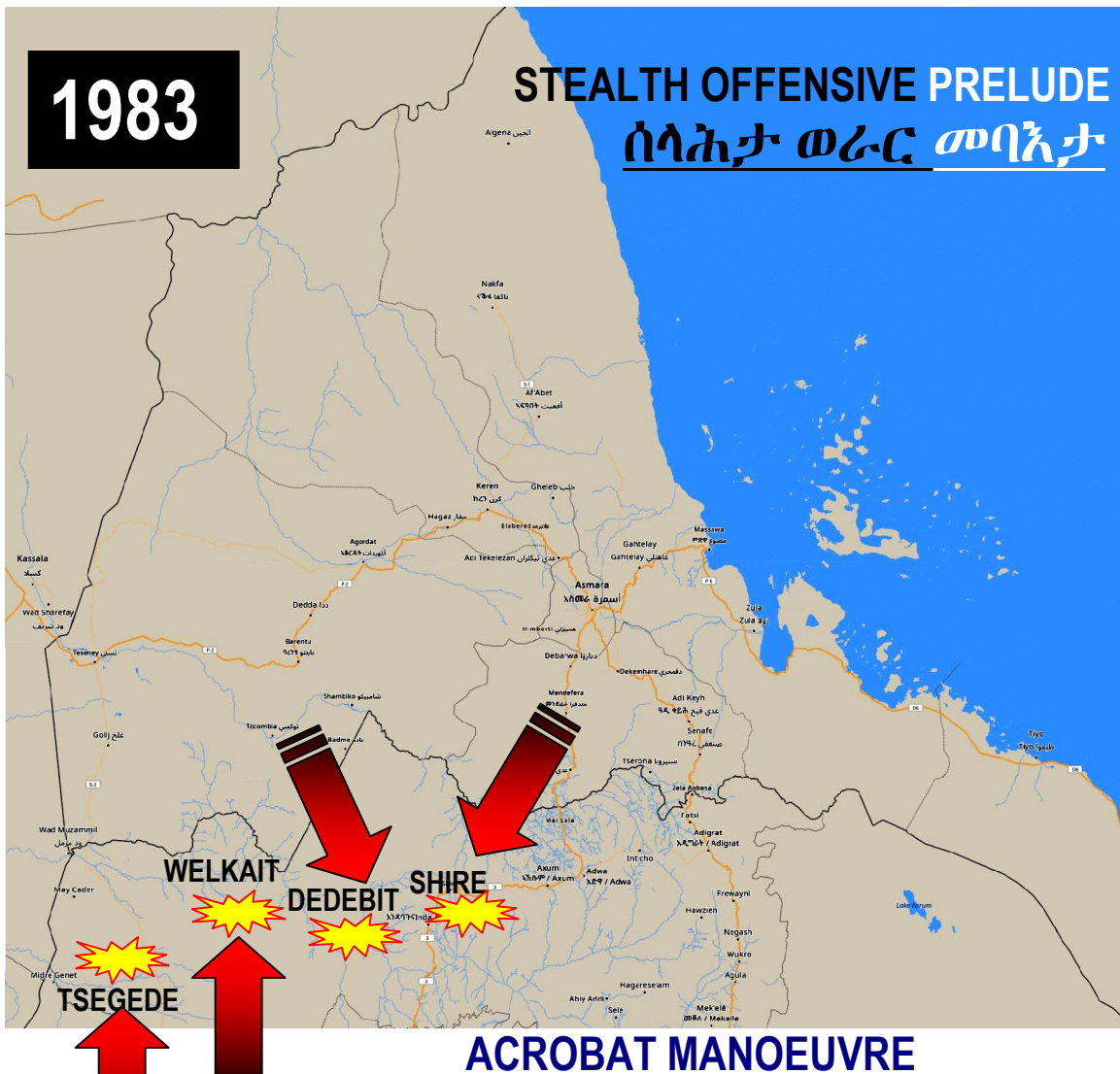


EPLF ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN in defence.

MIG-23 (top) and MIG-21 (bottom), loaded with bombs in reconnaissance over the skies.



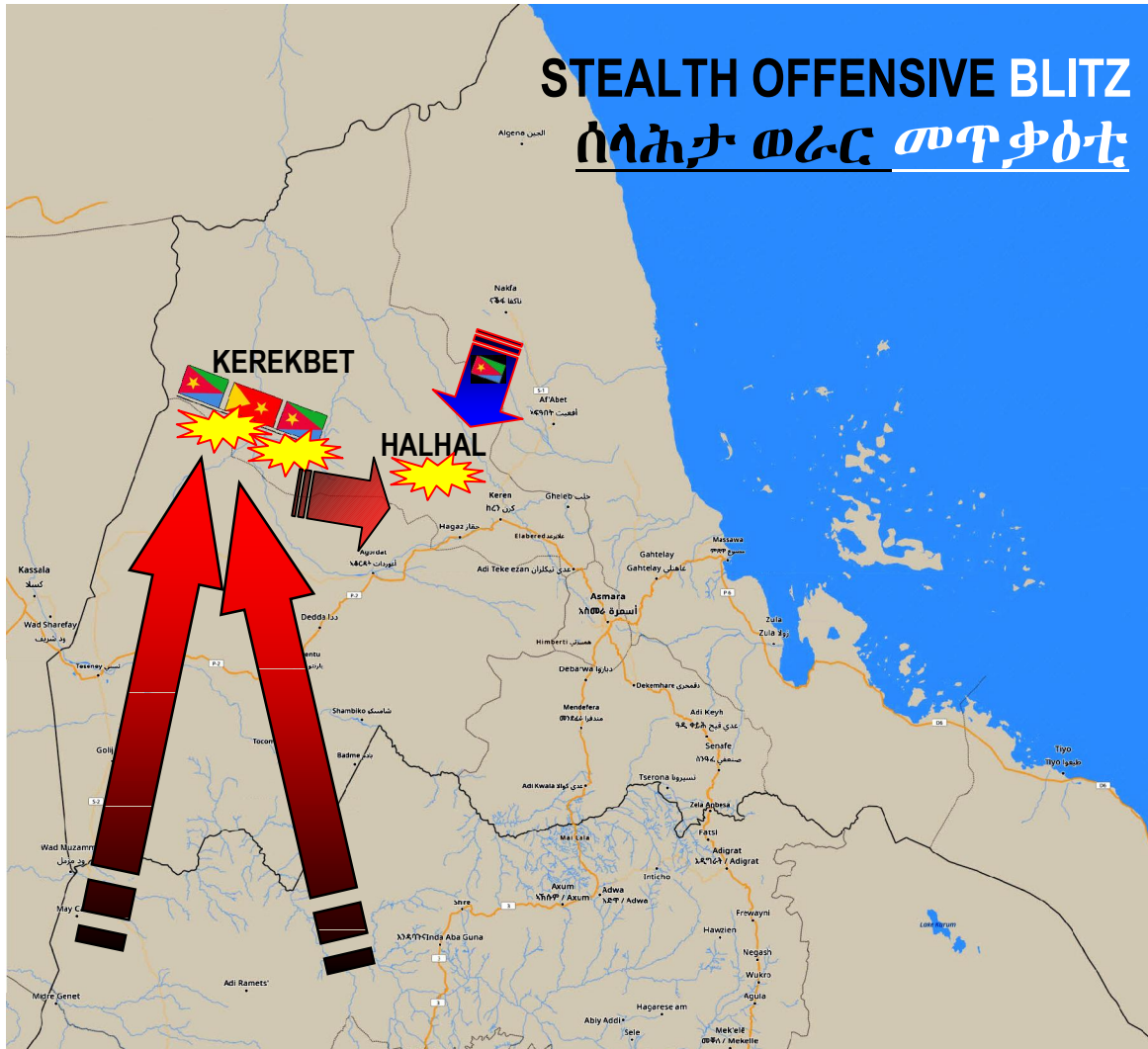
1982 6TH OFFENSIVE



In 1983 Derg launched a tactical offensive in Tigray known as “Acrobat Manoeuvre”. Acrobat Manoeuvre is a military exercise set on softer targets prior engagement on tougher targets down the road. Armies are purposely sent to attack softer targets in order to undergo exercise in favourable situations prior deployment in another major offensive.

March 2, 1983: Scores of Derg divisions were purposely sent to attack softer targets in Tigray in an Acrobat Manoeuvre. In the manoeuvre, Derg divisions stormed Tsegede, Welkait, Dedebeit and Shire and they were showered with victories in Tigray and Gondar while TPLF had major setbacks in the battles. TPLF abandoned their base areas and retreated deep into mountain ranges. After the Acrobat Manoeuvre was over, the divisions were sent to Eritrea.

March 26, 1983: The divisions of Acrobat Manoeuvre were deployed in Eritrea and Stealth Offensive or “Selahta Werar” (ሰላሕታ ወራር) was launched.



STEALTH OFFENSIVE

March 26 - June 30, 1983: EPLF and TPLF combatants defended the critical Kerkebet fortification in the Barka Frontline against the assaulting Derg divisions who were toughened by the Acrobat Manoeuvre and who had gained several victories in Tigray and Gondar prior Stealth Offensive.

EPLF's BRIGADE 80TH was on the left flank, TPLF's BRIGADE 55TH was at the centre and EPLF's BRIGADE 23TH was on the right flank of the Kerkebet fortification.

July 6 - August 15, 1984: EPLF carried out counteroffensive and targeted Derg's base area in Afabet. The countermeasure forced Derg to shift his plan from Kerkebet to Afabet in order to protect Nadew Command and Afabet. Derg halted the pursuit in Kerkebet and brought the army to Halhal to counteract EPLF's initiative. Heavy fighting continued for 6 weeks at Halhal and with the flare-up of fighting at Halhal Stealth gradually melted away, out of existence.



ARKEBE OQUBAY
High-ranking TPLF official.



BEREKET SIMON
High-ranking TPLF official.

Dear Eritrean readers, Selam & Merry Christmas on the occasion of January 25, 2018.

Haile M. Okbe

STEALTH OFFENSIVE

ሰላሕታ ወራር

A year after Derg's defeat in the Red Star Campaign, Derg launched a sudden and silent offensive known as Stealth Offensive (**ሰላሕታ ወግያ**). EPLF dubbed it "Selahta Werar" (**ሰላሕታ ወራር**). The main thrust of Stealth Offensive was in the area around Kerkebet, in the Barka Frontline.

The military planners of Derg learned serious lessons from their defeat in the Red Star Campaign (6TH Offensive) of 1982. They learned to avoid attacking strong fortifications of EPLF in face-to-face showdown.

STEALTH

HIT QUIETLY THE SOFT BELLY OF THE ENEMY

In 1983, the military planners of Derg drew a radical military plan, which avoided face-to-face spearhead against strong and mountainous fortification of EPLF. Instead they drew dual staged offensive and implemented it sequentially, first in Tigray and then in Eritrea as seen on the maps (Page 20-21).

March 2, 1983: Acrobat Manoeuvre (Tactical Offensive)

The first stage of the offensive or the Acrobat Manoeuvre was launched in Tigray. Derg divisions attacked softer targets of TPLF in Tigray and parts of Gondar. They gained several victories in the offensive. TPLF was routed in all the battles and it abandoned its base areas and retreated to mountain hideouts.

March 26, 1983: The Blitz (Strategic Offensive)

The second stage of the offensive or the Blitz was launched in Eritrea. It was the beginning of Stealth Offensive or “Selahta Werar” (ሰላከታ ወራር).

The military planners of Derg drew two primes in their strategy.

1. Attack Stealthily.

The army had to use the least force as possible to avoid detection. The army had to avoid the use of tanks and heavy armaments in order to surprise the enemy. The attacks had to be carried out by barely armed infantry in dark nights.

2. Attack soft bellies of the enemy.

The army’s striking methodology was to attack the easiest targets. This was in contrast to attacking tougher targets.

ETHIOPIAN FORCES

1. Wuqaw Command (ወቃው እዝ)

Northeastern Sahel Frontline

Division: 23RD, 15TH

2. Nadew Command (ናደው እዝ)

Nakfa/Afabet Frontline

Division: 19TH, 21ST, 22ND

3. Mentir Command (መንጥር እዝ)

Halhal Frontline

Division: 18TH, 2ND, 3RD

4. Stealth Task Force

24TH Divisions

16TH Mechanized Brigade

29TH Mechanized Brigade

EPLF /TPLF Combatants

EPLF Brigades:

4TH

31ST

44TH

51ST

58TH

70TH

74TH

77TH

76TH (MECHANIZED BRIGADE)

Kerkebt Fortification

EPLF Brigades: 23RD, 80TH

TPLF Brigade: 55TH

THE BLITZ

On March 26, Derg's Task Force began to strike soft belly of EPLF at Kerekebet, on the Barka Frontline. To boost Stealth Offensive, simultaneous attacks were also launched on Northeastern Sahel Frontline, Nakfa/Afabet Frontline and Halhal Frontline.

Initially Stealth Offensive went well according the military planners of Derg. Derg's Task Force breached Kerkebet fortifications and some grounds were lost to EPLF and TPLF defenders.

Because of the strict requirements set in the planning of Stealth, the offensive was continuously changing directions and locations like unpredictable ghost. At times, this created confusions to EPLF and TPLF defenders.



A lone EPLF combatant manning a manhole along a trench line.

To bolster the assault on Kerkebet, two Derg divisions moved from Melebso on Halhal Frontline and spearheaded toward Asmat. Asmat was EPLF's hub, which is located at the centre between Nakfa on the east and Kerekebt on the west. Asmat was threatened and EPLF retreated from Asmat.

Brigade 23RD and 80TH of EPLF and Brigade 55TH of TPLF bravely engaged the sneak attacks which were carried out in dark nights by Derg's Task Force. After few days EPLF and TPLF combatants were able to repulse Derg's Task Force at Kerkebet and regained the lost grounds.



EPLF howitzer firing a charge against enemy positions.

On Halhal Frontline fresh EPLF units mounted counteroffensive in the area around Asmat. Asmat was retaken by EPLF from Derg divisions, which had controlled it earlier.

THE DEATH OF STEALTH

The tide of Stealth Offensive hyped and ebbed for four months on various locations on Barka.

On June 6, EPLF launched major counteroffensive on Halhal Frontline. The attack jeopardized Nadew Command's headquarter in Afabet. Derg's Task Force was urgently transported from Kerkebet to Halhal Frontline to alleviate the threat to Afabet by EPLF. This brought the end of Stealth.

1984 DERG-EPLF SECRET AFFAIRS IS EXPOSED BY DERG.

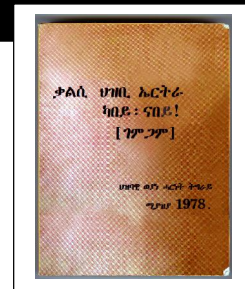


LONG MARCH OF SECRET AFFAIRS: Major Berhanu Bayeh, Foreign Minister of Provisional Military Administration Council (Derg) of Ethiopia (L) and his counterpart in the secret affairs, Isayas Afewerki, Deputy Secretary General of EPLF (R). The two men were engaged in secret talks from 1977 to 1984 in Berlin, East Germany. In 1984, Derg exposed of the presence of “SECRET TALKS WITH SHABIA REBELS”.

While EPLF and TPLF combatants were heroically beating off Derg’s offensives in the Red Star Campaign and Stealth Offensive in Eritrea, Isayas was secretly dealing with the enemy in Berlin. Derg blew up the affairs through his media. TPLF saw the secret affairs as “SERIOUS BACKSTABBING TO TPLF BY EPLF”. It registered it, as betrayal by the partner.

1984 BREAKING THE TIES ALL TOGETHER

The unveiling of Derg-EPLF secret affairs prompted TPLF to break the ties all together with EPLF in 1984, followed with the publication of TPLF’s book QALSI HZBI ERITREA KABEY NABEY. The book condemned DERG-EPLF secret affairs as well the dictatorial and anti-democracy characters of the leadership of EPLF. Isayas’s never-ending hostility against TPLF was born out of the affairs and the publication of the book.



ISAYAS ADMITS EPLF-DERG SECRET AFFAIRS IN BERLIN



ፍላጊ-ሕታም

89/9007

በጊዜ ሲሰጥ « ንፍጽረታት »

- እብ ሓጎን ፍልይ፣ ቦታ፡ አብታ ናይ ባረንቱ ውግእ እ፣ ሚዛን ለውጢ ኔፍሥ ብኣጠቓላሊ ክርእ ከሎ ግን ጸብለልትነት ናትና ኢያ
- ከነልምዕ፡ እብ መከብብር፡ ህገብ፡ ቁጠባዊ ምምሕያሽ ከነምጽእ ግዜ ነቋጸሊሉ ጉዳይ እያኮነን
- እ፣ ናይ ሰላም መንገዳ እያተገጸመን፡ ከተ ግዜ ከም መትከል ደብርሒሉ፡ሎ፡ ክነቃለለሉ ኢያ፡ውን
- ሃገራውያን ባለታታት፡ ነምትእኸኻም ዝምቐእ ከታት፡ ምፍጣር፡ ምትብብሮም ምዕፃሞም፡ ሓላፍትና ኢያ



ብዳዩ ኢሳያስ አፈወርቂ፡ ምክትል ሞና ጸሐፊ ሀ.ፖ.ሐ.ኤ.

15-10-1985

Φ.175

MOCK INTERVIEW: Isayas Afewerki “interviewed” by reporter Yemane Gebreab (Left), member of Information and Propaganda Department of EPLF.

“ QUOTE and UNQUOTE ”

Festamietat Special Issue

15 October, 1985

ጋዜጠኛ የማነ ገብርኣብ

Reporter Yemane Gebreab

ካብዚ መትከላዊ አረኣእያኡ ብዛዕባ ሰላማዊ ፍታሕ ተበጊሱ ህ. ግ. ኣብዚ ዝሓለፈ ልዕሊ 10 ዓመታት ሓያሎ ስጉምቲታት ወሲዱ ኢዩ። ህዝብታት ኤርትራን ኢትዮጵያን ከምኡ'ውን ህዝብታት ዓለም ብዛዕባ እዚ ናይ ህ. ግ. ጸዕሪ ብሩህ ስእሊ መታን ክህልዎም ዝርዝር መግለጺ'ዶ ምሃብኻ?

In the last 10 years, EPLF out of its principled view has taken several initiatives regarding peaceful settlements. In order to portray clear picture of EPLF's efforts for peace to the public of Eritrea, Ethiopia and world community, can you provide us detailed descriptions?

ኢሳያስ አፈወርቂ

Isayas Afewerki

ኣተሓሳስባና ብዛዕባ ሰላም ብመጎታዊ መንገዲ እናማዕበለ ኢዩ መጸኡ ሕጂ ግን ዝኣክል ሓይሊ ተረኺቡ ደርግ ስርዓቱ ስለዝደልደለ፡ ምስቲ ናይ ሶቬየት ወተሃደርዊ ሓገዝ ዘተኣማምን ኩነታት ስለዘሎ ሕጂ ሰውራ ኤርትራ ክጭፍለኹ ይኸእልዮ፡ ቅድሚ ምጭፍላኹ ግን ማለት ቅድሚ ወተሃደራዊ ስጉምቲ ምውሳድ መንገብገብ ኣውጺእካ ምንቅስቃስ ኣይከፍእን ኢዩ፡ ዝብል ኔሩ። በዚ ኣተሓሳስባ ተደሪኹም **ኣብ ናይ በርሊን ዘተ ተሳቲፎም።**

Our view regarding peace has morphed in logical way but now, because the regime of Derg has bolstered, and with the Soviet military assistance it is now favourable condition for Derg to crush the Eritrean revolution. However before crushing it militarily, it may not be bad to fly like a dove of peace. This has been the overriding opinion so far. Based on that motivation, **they participated in the Berlin Talks**

EPLF: REVOLUTION WITH CLASSES

External combatants who were physically mixed with EPLF combatants

ELF	1980	Northeastern Sahel Frontline	NO MIX
TPLF	1982	Northeastern Sahel Frontline	YES
TPLF	1983	Barka Frontline	NO MIX
ELF Sagem	1983-1987	Halhal Frontline	NO MIX

FATAL MISTAKE



ELF: Isayas accepted no mixing of ELF and EPLF combatants in 1980 when the two national organizations agreed and implemented terms of United Front. ELF and EPLF combatants manned separate trench lines in Northeastern Sahel Frontline under the United Front terms.



ELF Sagem: Isayas accepted no mixing of ELF Sagem (Central Command) and EPLF combatants after Sagem returned from Sudan to Eritrea in March 1983 to continue their national duties in the revolution. Sagem and EPLF combatants manned separate trench lines in Halhal Frontline in the period 1983-1987. Finally, a small number of willing Sagemists were swallowed by the EPLF in the 2nd Congress of EPLF in March 1987 and Sagem disappeared for good.



TPLF: Isayas accepted mixing EPLF and TPLF combatants during Red Star Campaign in the period, February to June, 1982. TPLF dispatched 5,000 combatants from Tigray to Sahel to assist EPLF in the defence against Derg's Red Star Campaign or 6TH Offensive.



GENERAL SEARE MEKONNEN

Chief of Staff of Ethiopian Armed Forces. In 1989, Seare was commander of TPLF Division identified as “Aurora”.

Mixing EPLF and TPLF combatants proved a very bad mistake for Isayas. In barely five months of staying together with EPLF in Sahel, TPLF discovered all the mantles and secrets of EPLF because Isayas made fatal mistake. He allowed free mixing of TPLF combatants with EPLF counterparts.



ABAY TSEHAY

Graduate of Bahri Bara Drill Camp in Semenawi Bahri, Eritrea, 1975.

DMU DMU BINGE

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During 6TH Offensive some Platoon commanders (መራሕተ ጋንታታት) or Company commanders (መራሕተ ሓይልታት) of TPLF as well TPLF commoners were inserted into structure of EPLF echelons.

Under Isayas's EPLF/TPLF mixing protocol, if the assigned Company commander is from TPLF, then the Commissioner of the Company would be from EPLF. Then the spoiled EPLF Commissioner would take the TPLF Company commander to the brigade HQ to indulge on Dmu Dmu binge.

Dmu Dmu is powerful booze made out of rice and sugar. The scrupulous TPLF commanders from Tigray quietly watched as their “mentors” got immersed in Dmu Dmu binges, most nights.

SEX TENTS

ናይ ሰከሰ ቴንቶች

Staying mixed with EPLF combatants, was quite bonanza for TPLF. TPLF watched EPLF leaders routinely indulge on predatory sex on young women fighters. Predatory sex took place most of the time during nights and usually in the tents installed beside brigade headquarters.

Some TPLF combatants named those particular tents, “Sex Tents”. The Sex Tents were quite visible for any fishing eyes. During nights, some TPLF commanders watched young women whisked from the trench lines to the Sex Tents.

REVOLUTION WITH TWO CLASSES

ክልተ ደርብታት ዝሓቆሉ ሰውራ

TPLF discovered EPLF was a revolution composed of two classes, the oppressor class (Isayas and his henchmen) who owned the ultimate power at the top of EPLF and the

subordinate Tegadelti who owned nothing except taking orders from the above, at the bottom of EPLF.

TPLF noticed EPLF upper class owned quality garments, newer jackets, blue jeans, wore shiny hand watches, smoked cigarettes non-stop, they were feed with tasty foods, binged on Dum Dmu almost every night while the EPLF masses lived with just bare necessities.

To TPLF watchers, EPLF was utterly opposite their imagination and void of any mentorship qualities.

SEED OF HOSTILITY

The culmination of experiences, Derg-EPLF secret affairs in Berlin Sex tents beside Brigade HQ in Sahel Dmu Dmu binges by EPLF leaders A revolution of two classes and other observations by TPLF resulted in the publication of TPLF book, “QALSI HZBI ERITREA KABEY NABEY”.

The terrible book publicly condemned EPLF leadership as dictatorial and anti-democratic element. It triggered the never-ending Isayas’s hostility against TPLF. The hostility, at times intensifying and at other times fading continued for three and half decades and all the way up to this moment.

Shall continue on Part - 3

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